CLASS STRUCTURE AND THE CLASS FORMATION OF SKILLED WORKERS IN EDINBURGH, c.1850- c.1900

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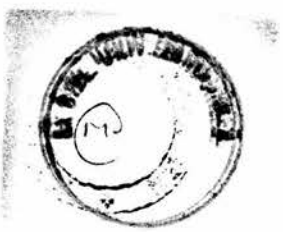

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b) is the result of my own original work.

Signed:

SUMMARY

This study analyses the social position, behaviour and ideology of artisans in Victorian Edinburgh. It is argued that the emergence of class institutions and ideologies can only be understood historically, and that ideology must be seen in a dynamic relation to the changing experience of actors, rather than as fixed and static. The emergence of new ideologies and institutions must thus be explained in the context of a basic ambivalence and instability of world views. The often noted ambivalence of the artisan strata in nineteenth century society provides an illustration of this; as a preliminary to analysis of these strata an attempt is made to clarify the concept of "labour aristocracy". Three relevant levels of analysis are identified: the structural differentiation in the class situations of working class groups; cultural distinctions, arising from the behaviour patterns and styles of life of different groups; and the impact of these differences on working class movements. A marked structural differentiation is a necessary, but not sufficient pre-condition for the existence of a "labour aristocracy" at the other two levels.

Part one of the study is concerned with the problem of structural differentiation. This is set in the local context of urban development. The traditional functions of the city, and the exceptional size of its middle class co-existed with the growth of population, newer industries and industrial and working class districts. The local working population was occupationally heterogeneous; the wide range of skilled trades facilitates comparative occupational analysis. This analysis

reveals wide economic differences between skilled and unskilled labour, but also within the skilled working class itself. A group of exceptionally prosperous trades contrasts with precariously placed trades marked by wide internal differences and large lower sections. This picture of occupational differences is broadly confirmed by the more rigorous evidence of workers' earnings (as opposed to wage-rates) and the physique of children of men in different occupations. Wide differences in social experience were similarly associated with the methods of production and industrial organisation typical of nineteenth century industry, which depended heavily on the skills, experience and initiative of apprenticed craftsmen, rather than on bureaucratised managerial systems.

Part two attempts to show the existence of separate sub-cultures and patterns of behaviour within the working class, and to trace the emergence of an upper, "aristocratic" stratum. Thus it is argued that the 1850's to 70's were marked by the formation of an occupationally heterogeneous upper stratum of "superior artisans". Evidence is presented of a differentiation in housing conditions, which, it is argued, had cultural meanings, linked to particular perceptions of urban neighbourhoods and evaluations of the home and family life. Leisure, voluntary organisation membership and marriage patterns also suggest the cultural distinctiveness of the upper stratum, as do the values and behaviour patterns associated with the practice of "thrift". The social experience of the skilled worker inclined him to think in terms of a relatively long-run improvement in his situation. He might become a small master, or enter certain white collar occupations,

but this possibility was less important than the economic range within the skilled working class, and the opportunities and aspirations associated with it; the small master and white collar groups were anyway closest socially to the upper working class, rather than to the middle class proper. The impression of separation from the middle class is reinforced by an examination of the meanings of artisan aspirations. Although these aspirations were often formulated in terms of "respectability" and "self help", in a language apparently adopted from middle class value systems, they took on new meanings as they were adapted to artisan conditions of life. The artisan's outlook was therefore an ambivalent one, marked by a strong sense of class identity, an insistence on the independence of working class institutions, and certain "solidaristic" modes of behaviour sharply divergent from those of the middle class, as well as by "respectability".

Part three shows the impact of these cultural patterns on labour movements. The 1860's and 70's saw the assertion of a distinctive trade union and working class identity and political presence in the city; this class formation was strongly marked by the position and outlook of the labour aristocracy. The typical aspiration was for an acceptance of the corporate status of the organised working class, a symbolic recognition of its claim to a stake in the community. Claims of this kind were generally contained after 1867 within a middle class dominated Liberal party, of which working class radicalism was a relatively autonomous compenent part. The last two decades of the century saw marked changes in trade unionism and working class politics, and

it is argued that these reflected the shifting position and attitudes of skilled workers, as much as the more discussed growth of unskilled workers' trade unionism. Emphasis is laid on changes in the work situation of skilled labour, arising from technological change and the growing scale of industry, and on the emergence of a more homogeneous urban working class culture (though one still characterised by extremely wide differences). Three important skilled trades (compositors, shoemakers and engineers) were involved in disputes arising from technological change, which had a considerable impact on trade union opinion in Edinburgh. It is suggested that socialist ideas and programmes appealed to artisans in the light of these experiences, and that the emergence of a more broadly based and politically autonomous labour movement should be explained in terms of this convergence of socialist activity with the industrial experience of skilled trade unionists. It is therefore argued that the developments of the 1880's and 90's should be related to changes in the situation, activity and outlook of the labour aristocracy, who came to play a leading role in a wider class movement, and that many features of British labour politics in subsequent years reflect this influence.

PREFACE

This study attempts to explore questions of class formation and popular consciousness, in the framework of a particular local and historical setting. I have thus tried to begin my analysis from the conditions of life, aspirations and institutions of specific groups of the working class. This approach reflects two related assumptions, of whose validity I have become more firmly convinced as the research proceeded: that class can only be understood in a historical perspective; and that such an understanding must give due importance to the variable economic and social structures of different localities. In the light of these statements the literature on working class history appears, with a few notable exceptions, to be somewhat unsatisfactory. There is a considerable body of fairly well documented material on the formal institutions of the labour movement on one hand, and far-reaching sociological generalisations on the other; both these types of writing contrast oddly with a dearth of good local monographic material, and an apparent failure to base analysis on the fact that working people lived their lives at particular times and places, and perhaps had particular hopes and fears, apart from those articulated by the official spokesmen of organised labour. The local monographic approach is thus in one sense a necessary narrowing and sharpening of focus. But in another sense it broadens the field of vision; it is only within local settings that we can hope to obtain some picture of the network of formal and informal institutions and social contexts within which people led their daily lives. And social consciousness must, I would argue, be understood in relation to the totality

of experience. A local study of the kind I have undertaken is thus of more than purely parochial interest. I have analysed the local evidence in relation to one of the more frequently encountered generalisations about the later nineteenth century working class: the hypothesis of the formation of a "labour aristocracy". And, as I suggest in the final chapter, the evolution of the Victorian upper working class stratum has a wider significance for the subsequent history of the British working class.

A certain scepticism about the demarcation between the disciplines of "History" and "Sociology" is implicit in these remarks. Social structures and ideological traditions are products of human history. Any attempt to analyse them ahistorically is crippled at the outset (so, equally, is a pure empiricist historiography, lacking in any rigorous conceptual framework). This is not, in my view, a question of the two disciplines "complementing" each other - but rather of the irrelevance of the disciplinary labels to an understanding of society. It naturally follows from this that the methodological problems of historical research should be regarded as no different in kind from those of any scientific analysis of social institutions. Unlike for instance the survey researcher, I have at no point been able to take anything approaching a random sample of the population studied. (Though it has been possible to sample from certain data sources, these are samples from the source as defined, which may or may not throw some light on a part of the population of skilled manual workers with which this work is concerned). The problem of generalisation has

thus often been of a substantive, rather than formal statistical nature. The non-random survival of data forces us to reconstruct the situation and ideology of actors from a series of fragments having a more or less central or peripheral relevance to these questions. Yet is seems to me that this state of affairs is no different from that prevailing in all social research; and historical research perhaps has the positive salutary effect of making it harder to give an air of specious statistical rigour to findings whose basic meaning is anyway questionable. I have, however, tried to use such statistical procedures as seemed appropriate to the type and quality of the various sets of data: for each set, it has been necessary to define with some care the population to which any generalisations from sample data have reference. It is at any rate arguable that, whatever the methodological problems, these are outweighed by the fact that any understanding of social class is necessarily historical.

It remains to make one further minor point of general relevance to what follows. The word "Edinburgh" may well appear the least problematic of the nouns in the title of this thesis. It should nonetheless be pointed out that the adjoining town of Leith was administratively and socially distinct throughout the period, and that Granton, Newhaven and Portobello were incorporated administratively only at its very end. There was, on the other hand, no doubt some integration of the economies and urban social structures of these areas with that of the city of Edinburgh - although it is only in the engineering and metal-working sector that we can speak of a unified labour market - and a certain

amount of participation by citizens of Leith, etc. in voluntary organisations based on Edinburgh. In general, however, statements in this study refer only to Edinburgh proper, unless otherwise specified, except with reference to the engineering trades (where it is impossible to distinguish Edinburgh from Leith). It is also, of course, true that the city boundaries of Edinburgh itself were extended from time to time (see Appendix 2); this can, however, be regarded as a real expansion of the population studied and has been so treated throughout.

I have been confirmed in my view of the irrelevance of disciplinary boundaries by the wide range of generous help I have received, and now gratefully acknowledge. For their advice and encouragement I am indebted to my supervisors, Frank Bechhofer and John Simpson, and to many other teachers and research students of the Departments of Sociology, Scottish History, History and Economic History at Edinburgh University. Every aspect of this study has been intensively discussed with Geoff Crossick, whose research on the working class in South East London will provide many interesting points of comparison. Other students of Scottish working class history will know how much I owe to Ian MacDougall and the Scottish Labour History Society. Parts of the data analysis were made possible only by the statistical advice of Mr. A. Fielding and the computer work of Mr. R. Bland and Mr. P. Morse. Dr. R. Passmore gave me expert guidance on the physiological questions raised by the study of children's heights in Chapter 3. Dr. W. A. Armstrong, Dr. H. Cunningham, Mr. A. G. Docherty and Dr. J. C. Williams allowed me to make use of their unpublished work, and discussed many points with me.

Reports on aspects of my research were given at meetings of the British Sociological Association, Scottish section, the Scottish Labour History Society and the Centre for Social History, University of Warwick, and I wish to thank all those who participated in the discussion on these occasions. Finally, I must acknowledge the help of my wife, not because of convention, but because being married to a social scientist has enabled me to understand many points, especially statistical ones, more clearly.

I wish to thank the following for giving me access to records in their care, for much kind hospitality and for answering my questions about their organisations: Mr. P. Bartholmew of Bartholmew Ltd.; Mrs. Calwell of Allan Ltd.; Mr. T. Donoghue of the City of Edinburgh Lodge, Scottish Order of Oddfellows; Miss Gordon and Mr. J. H. B. Munro of Scotsman Publications Ltd.; Miss R. Greig of the Scottish Decorators Quarterly Review; Mr. I. Hamilton Inches of Messrs. Hamilton & Inches; Mr. J. Henry of Edinburgh Trades Council; Mr. P. W. Kilpatrick of Constable Ltd.; Miss A. L. McWilliam and Mr. I. MacKenzie of MacKenzie & Moncur Ltd.; Mr. W. Simpson of the Foundry Section, A.U.E.W.; Mr. N. Steel of the Edinburgh Savings Bank; Mr. J. R. Stocks of the East of Scotland District, Amalgamated Society of Woodworkers. My use of the business archives mentioned was made possible by the survey work and the good offices of Mr. A. M. Broom of the National Register of Archives (Scotland) and Professor P.L. Payne. The Registrar General for Scotland and his staff kindly allowed me to consult census enumerators' books and marriage certificates and waived the fees normally payable. I also wish to thank the staffs

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CONTENTS

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* General Note — Per centages in some tables add up to more or less than 100 due to rounding

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN FOOTNOTES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY*

A.I.M.S.	Associated Ironmoulders of Scotland
AR	Annual Report
A.S.E.	Amalgamated Society of Engineers
Assoc. Joiners	Associated Carpenters and Joiners of Scotland
EcHR	Economic History Review
Edin.	Edinburgh
Edin. B.	Before title of trade unions, etc.: indicates Edinburgh branch of the organisation
I.L.P.	Independent Labour Party
MR	Monthly Report
N.B.	The North Briton
PP	Parliamentary Papers
QR	Quarterly Report
R.C.	Royal Commission
Ref.	The Reformer
S.C.	Select Committee
S.D.F.	Social Democratic Federation
S.T.A.	Scottish Typographical Association
S.T.C.	Scottish Typographical Circular
T.C.	Edinburgh Trades Council
Webb	Followed by reference number: Webb Trade Union Collection +

General Notes

* Location of all manuscript and other rare sources is indicated in the bibliography.

+ Items from sections A (MS notes by the Webbs), B (non serial printed matter) and C (union rule-books) of the Webb collection are cited by catalogue reference number; the conventions in the catalogue itself vary, but I have used arabic numerals for volume numbers and small Roman numerals for item numbers; thus C.1.i would be item i of volume 1 in section C.

CHAPTER I

THE ANALYSIS OF CLASS FORMATION

This work is a study in class formation. It attempts to show how: "some men, as a result of common experiences (inherited or shared), feel and articulate the identity of their interests as between themselves, and as against other men whose interests are different from (and usually opposed to) theirs."[1] Such a study raises certain general problems about the relationship between class situation, action and ideology; evidently these problems demand "more than an analysis of objective conditions coupled with a description of subjective reactions."[2] This introductory chapter, then, is concerned with these general aspects, and with their more specific application to the development of the working class in Victorian cities.

i. The Study of Class and Ideology

A considerable body of recent sociological writing has rightly been concerned with the critical importance of perceptions of the social order in accounting for behaviour.[3] My purpose here is not to give a comprehensive survey of this literature, still less to do justice to the many issues it has raised, but to draw attention to one general question. Despite their important merits these writers have, by and large, touched only obliquely

[1] E. P. Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class, Harmondsworth, 1968 (Pelican edition), pp.9-10.

[2] H. Wolpe, "Some Problems Concerning Revolutionary Consciousness", in R. Milliband and J. Saville (eds.), The Socialist Register, 1970, London, 1970, p.252.

[3] See, for example: J. H. Goldthorpe, D. Lockwood, F. Bechhofer and J. Platt, The Affluent Worker in the Class Structure, Cambridge, 1969; F. Parkin, Class Inequality and Political Order, London, 1971, chs.2,3 and works there cited; W. G. Runciman, Relative Deprivation and Social Justice, London, 1966.

on the processes by which "images of society" are generated, re-interpreted and changed. The emphasis has been on correlating the attributes of individuals, thus identifying inter-relations of situation, attitude and behaviour - a tendency no doubt encouraged by the heavy reliance on survey material. But there is a clear distinction between statistical correlation and theoretical explanation. This admittedly may be immaterial, if the purpose is simply to predict from easily obtainable social indicators some specific form of behaviour, assuming a fairly stable historical context. (Thus the weaknesses of Runciman's study of relative deprivation may not matter, if his purpose is to make limited predictions from answers to questions about social comparisons, self-rated class, etc. - though one weakness is certainly the central ambiguity as to whether this is all that is claimed, or whether the analysis is also intended to provide a model of the formation of attitudes to inequality [4]). But an understanding of class and class consciousness must also be concerned with the formation of ideologies and institutions. Lockwood, for example, quite legitimately indicates that his concept of "traditional working class" is a sociological type, not a historical hypothesis[5]. But if the sociological typology is to lead to explanations of variations in the strength and type of class consciousness we still need to know how, when, and why the patterns identified emerged in specific occupations and

[4] Runciman, op.cit.; for a cogent criticism, see J. Urry, "Role Performances and Social Comparison Processes", in J. A. Jackson (ed.), Role, Cambridge, 1972.

[5] D. Lockwood, "Sources of Variation in Working Class Images of Society", Sociological Review, 14, 1966, p.250.

communities. And Rimlinger has indeed shown that the high average "propensity to strike" of miners conceals a considerable range of national and historical variation, requiring comparative study of the specific histories of mining communities; similarly, Cannon points to historical experience and tradition as a source of the marked "union consciousness" of highly paid silled compositors.[6] These findings indicate the need to analyse class "over an adequate period of social change", enabling us to discern and to order theoretically "patterns in...relationships,;..ideas,... and institutions"[7].

Historical analysis is necessary, in the first place, because the ideological images of class identity are historically variable, and we must therefore guard against the danger of mistaking changes in economic and social structures and the forms of class culture, for the disappearance of the working class: "during the evolution of the working class, certain inessential elements, more closely tied to the worker's position as consumer than as producer, have been wrongly taken as specific features of 'class behaviour'"[8]. The perceptions and actions of working people

6 G. L. Rimlinger, "International Differences in the Strike Propensity of Coal Miners", Industrial and Labour Relations Review, 1958-9; I. C. Cannon, "The Social Situation of the Skilled Worker: a study of the compositor in London", Ph.D, London, 1961. And cf. R. Gregory, The Miners and British Politics, 1906-1914, Oxford, 1968, for an interesting comparative account of British coal-fields, which certainly suggests wide local variations in the historical formation of "proleterian traditional" attitudes.

7 Thompson, op.cit., p.11.

8 S. Mallet, La Nouvelle Classe Ouvrière, Paris, 1963, p.9 (my translation). This does not, of course, imply that the changing phenomenal definitions of class are irrelevant; upon the contrary, it becomes all the more important to study them, to avoid the error discussed by Mallet.

themselves are, of course, affected by these historically specific and restricted forms of class identity. Class action is partly conditioned by the historical availability of particular ideologies and organisational models:

> "Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past. The tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living. And just when they seem engaged in revolutionising themselves and things, in creating something that has never yet existed... they anxiously conjure up the spirits of the past to their service and borrow from them names, battle cries and costumes in order to present the new scene of world history in this time-honoured guise and this borrowed language....In like manner a beginner who has learnt a new language always translates it back into his mother tongue, but he has assimilated the spirit of the new language and can express himself freely in it only when he finds his way in it without recalling the old and forgets his native tongue in the use of the new."[9]

The student of class formation is thus faced with the task of showing how men's responses to their class positions were structured by the social imagery available to them, and of identifying and

[9] K. Marx, The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon, in K. Marx and F. Engels, Selected Works, Vol.I (2 Vols.), Moscow, 1962, p.247.

explaining moments of change - the points at which assimilation of a "new language" finally renders the old one redundant. This process is a complex one, and certainly not explicable by models based on vulger Marxism or other forms of mechanistic determinism.[10] The mediation through consciousness of changing structural conditions is an active process. There is, moreover, considerable evidence of the tendency, in all types of social setting, to re-interpret the "problematic" elements of new experiences, and render them compatible with established meaning systems.[11] On the other hand, this possibility would appear to be a finite one: under certain conditions established ideologies lose their capacity to make sense of experience, the course of action they legitimate no longer seems viable, people act in new ways and create new sets of beliefs and values.

It is in relation to problems of this kind that it is essential to investigate the formation of images of society. In undertaking such an investigation we must begin by recognising that popular consciousness may be rather less clear-cut than many sociologists - perhaps partly because of their reliance on survey methods - have suggested. I would therefore follow Westergaard in arguing that analyses of class attitudes have paid insufficient attention to phenomena of "ambivalence and internal contraditions"[12]. Similarly Parkin has drawn attention

10 See Thompson, op.cit., for a statement of this point.

11 See: P. L. Berger and T. Luckmann, The Social Construction of Reality, London, 1967, pp.122-34; C. Levi-Strause, The Savage Mind, London, 1966, pp.155-9.

12 J. H. Westergaard, "The Rediscovery of the Cash Nexus", in Milliband and Saville (eds.), op.cit., p.121; and cf.: R. Blackburn, "A Brief Guide to Bourgeois Ideology", in A. Cockburn and R. Blackburn (eds.), Student Power, Harmondsworth, 1969,pp.200-1 R. Price, An Imperial War and the British Working Class, London, 1972, p.4.

to the "uneasy compromise between rejection and full endorsement of the dominant order" as a characteristic of working class modes of thought.[13]

Class consciousness should therefore be studied in a perspective that treats social imagery and attitudes as complex, composed of divergent elements in a dynamic relationship to each other - rather than as clear-cut, homogeneous and undifferentiated. The emergence of new meaning systems can then be seen in terms of the shifting balance, in the consciousness of individuals, between alternative kinds of social imagery and sets of attitudes, and not of a uni-dimensional, linear progression from one fixed state to another.[14] It is, moreover, necessary to note another sense in which we must see ideology as differentiated. It typically comprises at one level a set of more or less concrete and pragamatic meaning systems, which Gramsci referred to as the "common sense" of popular consciousness; and at another level more formalised and systematic sets of beliefs and values, within which the fragmentary and inconsistent modes of perception and norms of conduct which make up "common sense" may be reordered, "rationalised" and integrated.[15] The mode of thought

[13] Parkin, op.cit., pp.91-2.

[14] This is argued by B. Dent, "Dual Consciousness", uppublished typescript.

[15] A. Gramsci, Selections from the Prison Notebooks, ed. and trans. Q. Hoare and G. Nowell Smith, London, 1971, pp.323-43; Berger and Luckmann, op.cit.; Levi-Strause, op.cit., pp.16-22. Gramsci, it should be noted, saw many elements of "common sense" as deriving from the historical availability of vulgarised versions of more formal ideologies (in Italy, above all religion) which through their institutionalisation (often in the remote historical past) came to form part of the given environment of popular life; cf. the passage cited below, footnote 17.

of working people is, as various commentators have pointed out, strongly biased to concrete and practical experience[16]. The meanings associated with that experience may be highly specific to particular contexts, and show a good deal of mutual inconsistency, deriving as they do from diverse sources:

> "When one's conception of the world is not critical and coherent but disjointed and episodic, one belongs simultaneously to a multiplicity of mass human groups. The personality is strangely composite: it contains Stone Age elements and principles of a more advanced science, prejudices from all past phases of history at the local level and intuitions of a future philosophy which will be that of a human race united the world over. To criticise one's own conception of the world means therefore to make it a coherent unity.... It therefore also means criticism of all previous philosophy, in so far as this has left stratified deposits in popular philosophy."[17]

In this framework it is possible to specify the contradictions, which may produce changes in ideology. Thus experience may conflict with established beliefs and values, different elements of "common sense" conflict with each other, and with the "formal ideology", etc.:

[16] Parkin, op.cit., pp.89-90; Price, op.cit., p.5, pp.238-42.

[17] Gramsci, op.cit., p.324.

> "This contrast between thought and action, i.e. the co-existence of two conceptions of the world, one affirmed in words and the other displayed in effective action, is not simply a product of self-deception. Self-deception can be an adequate explanation for a few individuals taken separately ....., but it is not adequate when the contrast occurs in the life of great masses. In these cases the contrast between thought and action cannot but be the expression of profounder contrasts of a social historical order."[18]

As established ideologies and institutions are made increasingly problematic by their class experience, people acquire new beliefs and seek to create new institutions.[19]

The perspective outlined above may help re-formulate such problems as the patterning of class relations, the extent to which the sub-ordinate classes accept or contest the rule of the dominant class, the "integration" of the working class in capitalist society. The behaviour of working class people - as is clear enough in the case of the Victorian artisans with whom this study will be concerned - may reflect, in different contexts and at different times, an acceptance of values propagated by the dominant class, and a vigorous sense of separate class identity and interest. It is

[18] Ibid., pp.326-7.

[19] The capacity of an ideology to give an intelligible account of experience may be as important as its material bearing on "class interest" in a vulgar Marxist sense: it is arguable, e.g. that the appeal of socialist ideas in the late nineteenth century lay in the explanation they provided of the changing experience of skilled workers (see below, ch.9).

important, then, to examine the contexts of different forms of behaviour and ideology; manifestations of social tension may be contained and re-interpreted within the dominant value framework, so that dissident social imagery remains fragmentary, its meanings suppressed or altered. We must therefore consider the whole organisation of cultural life - in the widest sense of the term - the process of institutionalisation which makes a restricted range of ideological meanings available to members of the society. Gramsci's concept of class "hegemony" directs attention to this area of analysis. Gramsci sought to explain "the 'spontaneous' consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group", through the organisation of "the ensemble of organisms commonly called 'private'" (as opposed to the coercive power of the state apparatus)[20]. It must be stressed that this concept of politico-cultural hegemony does not refer to the imposition of an ideological uniformity, or merely to the more direct and cruder forms of ideological indoctrination; upon the contrary, Gramsci argues, the strength of the ruling class rests on the mediation of values and modes of behaviour through the voluntary activity of formally autonomous bodies. Hegemony, then, refers to the capacity to contain and to order diverse ideologies and modes of action in ways compatible with the capitalist relations of production:

20 Gramsci, op.cit., p.12; and cf. Wolpe, op.cit., pp.270-3 for a discussion of the relevance of Gramsci's ideas. As students of Marxist thought are well aware, Gramsci was obliged to adopt a highly original terminology to evade prison censorship: "fundamental group" is a euphemism for the two basic classes defined by capitalist relations of production, and "dominant fundamental group" refers to the ruling class in a Marxist sense (in capitalist societies, the bourgeoisie).

> "So the objective correspondence of the 'interests' of a politically dominant class and of the politically dominant ideology is only intelligible if the internal unity of this ideology is deciphered, not by means of one class consciousness/world-conception, but through the unity at the political level of the various conflicting classes. This ideology may therefore comprise a number of 'elements' which transcribe the way classes other than the hegemonic class live their conditions of existence."[21]

By this process of "transcription" the actions of the subordinate classes are contained within the hegemonic ideology:

> "It signifies that the social group in question may indeed have its own conception of the world, even if only embryonic; a conception that manifests itself in action, but occasionally and in flashes - when, that is, the group is acting as an organic totality. But this same group has, for reasons of submission and intellectual subordination, adopted a conception which is not its own but is borrowed from another group; and it affirms this conception verbally and believes itself to be following it ...."[22]

Gramsci's analysis leads to the important conclusion that the subordination of the working class is to be understood, not as the result of an absence of class organisation and consciousness, but of the effective containment of social conflict and dissident ideologies within circumscribed institutional spheres. Again, we

[21] N. Poulantzas, "Marxist Political Theory in Great Britain", New Left Review, 43, 1967, p.67: emphases in original.

[22] Gramsci, op.cit., p.327.

may quote Gramsci, for an account of the different levels of class organisation:

> "The first and most elementary of these is the economic-corporate level: ...; in other words, the members of the professional group are conscious of its unity and homogeneity, and of the need to organise it, but in the case of the wider social group this is not yet so. A second moment is that in which consciousness is reached of the solidarity of interests among all the members of a social class - but still in the purely economic field. Already at this juncture the problem of the State is posed - but only in terms of winning politico-juridical equality with the ruling groups: the right is claimed to participate in legislation and administration, even to reform these - but within the existing fundamental structures."[23]

A main thesis of this work will be that the class activity and value systems of the Victorian artisan represent this "second moment" - the emergence of a powerful, but still limited, or "corporate" in Gramsci's phrase, class consciousness. On the other hand, changes in conditions of life, culture and patterns of collective action made the maintenance of this pattern problematic. The emphasis will therefore be on dynamic processes of social change, and on contradictory and ambivalent elements in responses to change.

[23] Ibid., p.181

ii. The Problem of the Labour Aristocracy

In this study I attempt to analyse, within these general perspectives, a concrete historical instance of class formation: that of the artisan strata of the later nineteenth century working class. Much of the writing - both contemporary and historiographical - about this group indeed poses by implication the problems I have outlined. The activities of the skilled workers mediated and diffused definitions of class identity and interest based on their own peculiar situation and outlook - while that outlook was itself an ambivalent and inconsistent one. The position of the upper strata of the working class, and their relations with other social strata thus pose many key questions in the study of social stratification.

The concept of an "aristocracy of labour" - which, in various forms, pervades writing about the British working class of the period - must be the starting point for any discussion of these issues.[24] The concept refers to: "distinctive upper strata of the working class, better paid, better treated and generally regarded as more 'respectable' and politically moderate than the mass of the proleteriat."[25]

It should be noted that, although a study of the position and culture of the skilled trades is the only practical point of approach, the boundaries of the upper strata do not coincide

[24] See, for example: R. Harrison, Before the Socialists, London, 1965, esp. ch.1; E. J. Hobsbawn, "The Labour Aristocracy in Nineteenth-century Britain", in Labouring Men, London, 1964. As these writers point out, the notion of a "labour aristocracy" was by no means peculiar to Marxist observers but was a commonplace of Victorian social commentary (e.g. Harrison, p.5).

[25] Hobsbawm, op.cit., p.272.

with those of skilled labour, but, as I shall attempt to show, include favoured sections from every skilled occupation and larger proportions from certain superior trades. The argument of this thesis will be that, in Edinburgh at least, we can indeed identify a separate upper working class group with the characteristics mentioned.[26] There are, on the other hand, certain difficulties raised by the existing discussions of this topic, which demand some preliminary clarification. Data on economic position - often merely on official wage-statistics - are juxtaposed to an impressionistic treatment of cultural behaviour and aspirations and trade union and political attitudes. This ignores the complex social processes and cultural structures which, as I have argued, condition perceptions of and responses to a particular situation.

A more adequate formulation of the labour aristocracy hypothesis thus involves three distinct levels of analysis:

1. The structural differentiation within the working class: here we must show that variations in class situation - incomes, economic security, work situation - constituted a set of systematic, inter-related structured inequalities within the manual working class.

[26] However the phrase "politically moderate" requires qualification. The evidence (see below, chs.8,9) suggests that throughout the period studied politically active workers (including those who were socialists) were recruited disproportionately from skilled occupations, while the links between labour politics and the unionised elements - a minority even of the skilled - may indicate a preponderance of the best placed, "aristocratic" sections of skilled labour. On the other hand, it is hard to determine the political opinions, if any, of less skilled groups (a notable exception being the national-agrarian radicalism of the Irish) and it seems most unlikely that they were more consistently radical than the artisan strata. The "moderation" of the labour aristocracy is thus to be seen in the part they played in defining the range of the political spectrum - on which they were generally somewhere to the left, whether radical-democractic or socialist - rather than in a comparison of their position on that spectrum with that of other workers.

2. Cultural differentiation: here attention will be directed to styles of life, patterns of social mixing and segregation within the urban community, and aspirations, in an attempt to show that the upper stratum projected a distinct and exclusive social identity.

3. Class institutions and patterns of collective action: here we must examine the articulation of organised class interest, and establish to what extent it reflects patterns of structural and cultural differentiation.[27]

An investigation of economic differences within the working class is therefore clearly an indispensable first step - and it is, indeed, at this level of analysis that most discussion has taken place, notably that of Hobsbawm's important paper.[28] Two points require comment. Firstly, Hobsbawm's procedure does not specify clearly the different levels of analysis. As a consequence there is some ambiguity in his treatment, an insidious transition from treating economic condition as an essential level of analysis to treating it as an indicator of membership of a formed stratum,

[27] My approach has affinities to that suggested by W. Wesolowski and K. Slomczynski, "Social Stratification in Polish Cities", in J. A. Jackson (ed.), Social Stratification, Cambridge, 1968, pp.178-9.

[28] Hobsbawm, op.cit. It should be added that this paper was written some time ago (1954) and that Professor Hobsbawm has expressed some agreement with an earlier and briefer formulation of the comments that follow: correspondence with the author, 1970. Some comments nonetheless still seem appropriate, in view of the fact that this paper is the most systematic existing statement of the labour aristocracy thesis with reference to nineteenth century Britain; the key importance of Professor Hobsbawm's ideas should be evident throughout the present work.

thus anticipating the results of analysis at the "cultural" and "political" levels. The criteria of "membership of a labour aristocracy" include economic and work situations, relations (presumably outside the employment situation) with other strata, "general conditions of living", and "prospects of future advancement"; as Hobsbawm points out, the data on earnings, "however inadequate", are rather less fragmentary than those on the other factors mentioned. But the conclusion: "We may therefore use it as our main criterion", unfortunately does not follow - though it would no doubt make matters easier if it did. For in the absence of information - or at least hypotheses - about the cultural and political aspects it is by no means clear of what economic condition is a criterion. Unless we can show the existence of a formed stratum, it is rather meaningless to discuss the criteria for assigning individuals to that stratum.[29]

The second point relates to the choice of dividing-lines in the earnings distribution. Thus the columns of an otherwise useful table showing proportions of workers in different wage categories are headed "percentage 'aristocrats' 40s. and more" and "percentage 'plebeians' 25s. and less"[30]. But it is not clear why these categories are chosen, especially in so far as the use of the term "aristocrats" implies a social and cultural demarcation. It may moreover be questioned whether national wage-figures - even if they do in fact represent reliable averages - throw much light on stratification within the working class. In view of the wide local variation in nineteenth century wage-rates the distribution for each town or region is perhaps

[29] Quotations in this paragraph are all from ibid., p.272.

[30] Ibid., p.283; cf. similar tables, pp.286-8.

best treated separately: a man earning, say, 25 s. a week in Aberdeen may occupy the same relative position in the local working class world as a London artisan earning twice that amount. We would expect variations in industrial and occupational structure to make for variations in the composition of the upper strata; the relative position of men in the same trade may differ from region to region. The analysis of economic differentiation has thus to penetrate beyond aggregate wage-figures, and examine comparatively the situation of specific occupations in specific localities.[31]

One further general point bears on the methodology of this study. When I move to my second level of analysis - that of the cultural distinctions between working class strata - concepts of "social status" will necessarily enter the discussion. Some general remarks may clarify the use I make of this term, especially since it has "become overweighted with conceptual cargo"[32]. There is considerable ambiguity in Weber's original statement, as well as in subsequent writing on this topic. It should be noted, firstly, that Weber's emphasis is on the formation of collectivities, which are "phenomena of the distribution of power" - status groups being

[31] See below, ch.3, esp. sect. ii. It may be added that my findings do suggest that the best placed occupations in Edinburgh were among those in Hobsbawm's list of "aristocratic" trades; but further comparative local studies are needed before we can conclude that the wage-figures quoted are in general reliable indicators of total economic position.

[32] Parkin, op.cit., p.34.

one such type of collectivity, whose membership is defined by "above all else a specific style of life"[33]. Status groups, then, "are normally communities", marked by a shared value system.[34] It does not necessarily follow from this conception that we can always speak - as do exponents of the multi-dimensional "neo-Weberian" approach to social stratification[35] - of a distribution of status in which every individual in a society can be assigned to a "status situation". For if "status situation" refers to "every typical component of the life fate of men that is determined by a specific, positive or negative, social estimation of honor"[36] it is necessary to specify the range of such components and their importance to the typical life-chances of different groups in the society under consideration. The well documented fact that people in modern industrialised societies perceive differences in the prestige of occupations does not necessarily imply the existence of a "status stratification"[37]. It has also to be shown how this

[33] M. Weber, "Class, Status, Party", H. H. Gerth and C. W. Mills, (eds.), From Max Weber; London, 1948, pp.181,187: emphasis in original. The centrality of group formation to Weber's concerns is indicated by G. Neuwirth, "A Weberian Outline of a Theory of Community", British Journal of Sociology, 20, 1969; it may be noted that many "neo-Weberian" writers ignore this emphasis on the dynamics of group formation.

[34] Weber, op.cit., p.186.

[35] For example: W. G. Runciman, "Class, Status and Power?", in Jackson (ed.), Social Stratification, op.cit.

[36] Weber, op.cit., p.187, emphasis in original.

[37] For the difficulties of "occupational prestige" scales: Parkin, op.cit., pp.40-2; J. H. Smyth, "Utility and the Social Order", British Journal of Sociology, 22, 1971.

perception affects the patterning of social relationships, and thus the "life fate of men"; and this, of course, raises questions of the visibility of status attributes (such as occupation, education or income) in different social settings, the bearing of those settings on total life-chances, and so on.[38]

I would argue, then, that the substantive importance of status group differentiation is highly variable. Although it may for some purposes be helpful to speak of a patterned distribution of "social honour" in modern urban industrial societies, this is, it seems to me, a qualitatively different phenomenon from the status order of, for example, pre-industrial Europe - or, for that matter, of Imperial Germany - and it may be questioned whether the same term should be used indiscriminately in both contexts. As any historically conscious reader will be aware, Weber's comments appear to have a special bearing on the transformation of European societies during the nineteenth century, which led to the emergence of what Parkin aptly calls a "dual

[38] For variations in the meaning and structural effect of status orders in modern Britain, see: R. Frankenberg, Communities in Britain, Harmondsworth, 1966, esp. pp.262-3; D. E. G. Plowman et al, "Local Status Systems in England and Wales", Sociological Review, 10, 1962; M. Stacey, "The Myth of Community Studies", British Journal of Sociology, 20, 1969. Parkin, op.cit., pp.34-6, draws the crucial distinction between the reputational status of individuals among their peers, and the formal status of social positions, but then rather oddly suggests that the latter is "quite independent of small-scale interaction processes": it is hard to see how social honour can affect life-chances without some interaction process, on whatever scale. The point is: to what extent are interaction and life-chances typically patterned by fixed statuses ascribed to particular positions?

system" and challenged the position of powerful hereditary status groups.[39] Industrialisation and urbanisation led to the breakdown of pervasive status orders, and to the emergence of pluralistic urban sub-cultures, not necessarily ranked in a unitary status group stratification.

This rather general discussion of the concept of social status is necessary to indicate how and why my approach to this topic will differ from that of some other students of social stratification, for example of Runciman: "If social stratification is three-dimensional, it must follow that the position of every person within a society is in principle capable of being designated as a vector in three-dimensional space"[40]. My own emphasis is rather on the formation of social identities, within a stratified and pluralistic society, through the styles of life and "restrictions on 'social' intercourse"[41] typical of specific strata. The articulation of claims to status is thus viewed as an element in the social imagery of specific groups. This allows for the important possibility of divergent and conflicting criteria of status evaluation. To refer back to the substantive concerns of this study, I shall argue that the outlook of the Victorian "superior artisan" can be understood only if we regard in this light the claim to social status he so

[39] Parkin, op.cit., p.39. The Weberian concept of status is of course also of continuing relevance to the analysis of phenomena of religious and ethnic stratification within advanced industrial societies. But this is quite apart from the proposition that there is a unitary status order on which every individual can, in principle, be ranked.

[40] Runciman, "Class, Status and Power?", op.cit., p.26.

[41] Weber, op.cit., p.187.

often articulated in such catch-words as "respectability", drawn from the vocabulary of his social superiors.[42]

We may close this discussion of conceptual and methodological problems by noting one implication common to all of them. Many of the deficiencies in our understanding of the Victorian working class - as of class formation generally - relate to the necessity of studying it in specific local settings. The cultural level of analysis, the total social environment and behaviour of the worker can be approached in no other way. The present study is therefore concerned with skilled labour in a Victorian city, and its conclusions cannot be generalised beyond the local case. I have nonetheless tried - as the foregoing discussion of the labour aristocracy implies - to relate the local evidence to issues of more than parochial interest. An appropriate framework is required for the comparative local studies on which real advances in this field now depend; it is to be hoped that the concepts and methodology, as well as the substantive conclusions, of the present work will make some contribution to developing that framework.

The arrangement of the thesis corresponds broadly to the three levels of analysis I have specified in re-formulating the labour aristocracy hypothesis. In part one, therefore, I begin with a brief treatment of the distinctive features of the urban economy and social structure of nineteenth century Edinburgh, and then proceed to a comparative analysis of the economic and work experience of various important skilled occupations. In part two I move to

[42] See below, chs. 5-7.

the cultural level of analysis and present some inevitably fragmentary evidence relating to the community life, values and aspirations of the artisan. In part three I attempt to relate the changing experience and culture of the upper stratum to the emergence of industrial and political organisations of the working class, leading, in the final chapter, to some rather more wide-ranging and speculative comments about the historical significance of the aristocracy of labour and thus of the findings of the present study.

PART I: CLASS STRUCTURE AND CLASS SITUATION

CHAPTER 2

THE SETTING: EDINBURGH IN THE LATER NINETEENTH CENTURY

It was argued in the preceding chapter that the analysis of class formation must have reference to particular local contexts. The worker's experience was not of Victorian capitalism generally, but of the economic and social structures of a particular locality.[1] Any account of the social situation of skilled workers must therefore be set in the context of the development of urban society in Victorian Edinburgh.

The city had many distinctive features. It was, in the first place, a capital city, the centre of national legal and religious institutions, the gathering place and educational centre for national elites and a national intelligentsia. These features developed during a long history; locally influential groups retained a strong sense of identification with this past. Large parts of the city had taken shape before the industrialisation and urban growth of the nineteenth century. The rapid expansion of the city - and of the industrial and commercial sectors of its economy - must be seen in the context of this inheritance from its past.

i. Urban Growth and Social Change

The most visible kind of change was undoubtedly the population growth experienced by Edinburgh, as by other large cities during the period.[2]

[1] Comparative studies of class relations in nineteenth century towns include: A. Briggs "The Background to the Parliamentary Reform Movement in Three English Cities", Cambridge Historical Journal, 10, 1952; J. O. Foster, "Capitalism and Class Consciousness in Earlier Nineteenth Century Oldham", Ph.D, Cambridge, 1967. And cf. Lockwood, op.cit.

[2] Census figures used in this study will be found in the following census reports, and are hereafter cited only by year and vol.no.: 1861 vol.I, PP 1861 L; 1861 vol.II, PP 1864 LI; 1871 vol.I, PP 1872 LXVIII; 1881 vol.I, PP 1882 LXXVI; 1881 vol.II, PP 1883 LXXXI; 1891 vol.II, pt.ii, PP 1893-4 CVIII; 1901 vol.I, PP 1902 CXXIX; 1901 vol. III, PP 1904 CVIII.

Table 2.1.

Population of Edinburgh and Intercensal Increase for Four Largest Scottish Cities, 1851-1901*

	1851	1861	1871	1881	1891	1901
Population Edinburgh:	160,302	168,121	196,979	228,357	261,225	298,113
Increase since previous census, Per Cent						
Edinburgh:	---	4.9	17.2	15.9	14.4	14.1
Glasgow:	---	20.0	20.8	2.3	15.8	10.2
Dundee:	---	14.5	31.6	17.7	9.3	3.9
Aberdeen:	---	2.5	19.4	19.2	15.8	18.2

Source. Returns relating to the Population, PP. 1852-3 LXXXIII; Census, 1861, I, tables ser.IV; Census, 1871, I, tables ser.V; Census 1881, I Census 1901, I, tables serV.

For full references to census reports see footnote 2.

Notes. * All figures according to Parliamentary boundaries: for boundary changes see Appendix 2. In 1901 the Municipality extended beyond the Parliamentary boundaries and had a population of 316,837.

All four cities grew most steeply during the 1860's; the figures for intercensal increases, however, reveal a patterning of population increase in Edinburgh, different from that of the far more industrialised cities of Glasgow and Dundee: "it has not, for some time past, made that progress in size and population, which has so remarkably distinguished most of the large commercial towns of the empire"[3].

3 McDowall's New Guide to Edinburgh, Edin., n.d., c1851 (12th ed.). For comparisons with Glasgow, see I. MacDougall (ed.), The Minutes of Edinburgh Trades Council, 1859-73, Edin., 1968, "Introduction", pp.xvi-xvii. Future references to MacDougall are all to the invaluable introductory and editorial matter in this edition, of which I have made extensive use; the minutes themselves are always cited by date, regardless of whether the reference is to this printed edition or do the MS minutes for post-1873.

Edinburgh is distinguished from the more industrial cities by the patterning of population growth, as well as by differences in occupational structure.

Together with the growth in population went a physical expansion of the urban area.[4] Nineteenth century development of a hap-hazard kind contrasted with the earlier planned building of the New Town. The impact of the railways was important in this respect: "Gathered round the railway lines are groups of ill-planned factory buildings and stores and beyond a conglomeration of houses for the working classes"[5]. The heavier local industries - brewing, rubber, glass, foundries - developed around the new transport facilities and spread from the nuclei of long established "noxious" trades (especially slaughterhouses and tanneries). Large tracts of working class housing grew up in these industrial districts: in Dumbiedykes and St. Leonards in the 1860's, Fountainbridge in the 70's, Gorgie in the 80's and 90's.[6] Many of the smaller scale and less obnoxious trades, however, retained central locations, especially those catering for the middle and upper class consumer market. In jewellry and precious metals, "the workshops of the small masters are situated in out-of-the-way lanes in the New Town";[7] down to the 1870's,

[4] For accounts of urban development: G. Gordon, "The Status Areas of Edinburgh", Ph.D, Edin., 1971; A. J. Strachan, "The Rural-Urban Fringe of Edinburgh", Ph.D, Edin., 1969.

[5] Institute of Public Administration, Studies in the Development of Edinburgh, London and Edin., 1939, p.19.

[6] Gordon, op.cit., pp.63-4; Strachan, op.cit., pp.36-8, 60-1.

[7] D. Bremner, The Industries of Scotland, Edin., 1869, p.123.

"all the printing-houses were to be found either down the closes or lanes or in some blind alley approached from the High Street or the Cowgate", although most of the larger firms moved to purpose built factories in the "more commodious outskirts" during the final quarter of the century.[8]

Increased social segregation was a feature of the new patterns of urban land-use. Although the social distinction between the Old and New Towns was a long-standing one, there was a certain traditional heterogeneity; the back-lanes of the New Town and areas like Canonmills and Broughton provided the "operative and occasional menial aid, which in most cases will be found in close proximity to the residences of the wealthy classes"[9]. Socially homogeneous housing became far more extensive with the development of working class areas like Dumbiedykes and Fountainbridge. The author of the Ordnance Gazeteer (1885) evokes the image of "workmen's houses extending toward Dumbiedykes and confronting Salisbury Crags", and concludes that working class dwellings were "now so numerous that had all been built in near neighbourhood they would have formed a considerable town".[10] There was likewise a development of middle class suburbs: according to a rather impressionistic account of 1908, the residents of Newington were the "aristocracy of retail trade", those of Morningside and the South Western suburbs "solicitors, accountants, stockbrokers and insurance men", and so on.[11] There is some statistical

[8] The Ballantyne Press and Its Founders, 1796-1908, Edin., 1909, pp.143-4.

[9] T. Thorburn, Statistical Analysis of the Census of the City of Edinburgh, Edin., 1851, p.10.

[10] F. H. Groome (ed.), Ordnance Gazeteer of Scotland, Edin., 1885, pp.479, 529.

[11] A. Keith, Edinburgh of Today, Edin. and Glasgow, 1908, pp.144-6.

evidence for the pattern of residential segregation in the 1850's. In a study of "status areas", Gordon found a concentration in 1855 of his highest housing grade in the New Town, his second highest was divided between the New Town and various suburbs, while the lowest grade (apparently inhabited almost entirely by manual workers) was concentrated in the Old Town, Fountainbridge, Bristo-St. Leonards and Greenside.[12]

The period of this study therefore saw a near doubling of population, the mushroom growth of districts of industrial land-use and working class housing, and an associated development of outer suburbs of a mainly middle class character. The overall effect was undoubtedly to intensify residential segregation. This development was superimposed on the activities traditionally associated with the city; and groups engaged in those activities continued to play a prominent role in local life. The growing industrial, financial and commercial activity of the period was, on the other hand, reflected in the emergence of newer social strata, of both the middle and working classes. The remainder of this chapter will be concerned with this development of occupational structure.

ii. Occupational Structure: The Non-Industrial Sector

Non-industrial employments have always figured prominently in the image of Edinburgh: "The city has a calm, steady character, in

[12] Gordon, op.cit., pp.36,45,69. The grades were based on rateable values. Gordon also reports a correlation between these grades and the 1921 census social classes; but this social classification seems unduly wide for our purposes, and the procedure of using a single classification for dates ranging from the 1850's to the 1960's is anyway questionable on general grounds. It would seem, however, that residents of the lowest grade were mainly manual workers.

keeping with the predominance of legal, educational, literary and artistic pursuits, from which it derives its chief maintenance, and contrasts broadly with the fluctuations, excitements, and mercantile convulsions, which produce so much vicissitude in manufacturing towns".[13] It is this image, relating to the rich local associations with a history stretching from the Middle Ages to the Scottish Enlightenment, that figures in the extensive literature about the city.

This impression of the city is to some extent supported by the evidence of the census tables. It must be emphasised here that the figures derived from these tables cannot be regarded as at all precise. Their drawbacks, and the working rules followed to mitigate the effects of these are discussed in Appendix 2. The census reports are nonetheless the best evidence available, and at least indicate the broad shape of the occupational structure. The figures reveal a considerable proportion in administrative, professional and service occupations; while the size of the domestic service group is a powerful indicator of the local concentration of the wealthier classes generally.

13 Groome (ed.), op.cit., p.534; cf. similar comments, e.g. McDowall's Guide, op.cit.; James Middlemass and Co., A Handbook to Edinburgh, n.d., p.10.

Table 2.2.

Administration, Professions, Commerce and Services as Per centage of Total Occupied Population, 1881 and 1901

	1881	1901
Administration, professions*	11.17	8.81
Commerce	5.26	7.25
Domestic service	20.51	16.05
Administration	1.68	1.69
Church	0.52	0.58
Law	1.50	1.59
Medicine	0.60	1.33
Teaching	1.80	1.91
Other professions, services etc.	5.07	1.71
	11.17	8.81
Insurance	0.35	0.40
Comm. traveller	0.73	0.93
Comm. clerk, etc.	2.75	4.55
Bankers, bank officials,clerks	0.47	0.46
Other comm.	0.96	0.91
	5.26	7.25

Source. Census 1881, II, tables ser.XV; Census 1901, III, tables ser.II. See above, footnote 2 to this chapter for full references to census reports.

Notes. See Appendix 2 for details of definitions and procedure used in this table.

* includes nurses, law clerks, etc.

The census reports also contain some comparative evidence that this was, indeed, a distinctive feature of Edinburgh. In 1901, for example, nine per cent of males in the city were in what is called the "professional class", the next highest figure among the four Scottish cities being five per cent for Aberdeen, with lower proportions in Glasgow and Dundee; similarly, 1.5 per cent were in the "domestic class", again followed by Aberdeen (0.8 per cent).

Figures for the "industrial class" fall into precisely the reverse order (ranging from 52 per cent for Edinburgh to 66 per cent for Dundee).[14]

There seems little doubt, then, that Edinburgh contained an unusually large professional and administrative middle class. The city also to some extent retained its traditional character as a gathering place and "centre of conspecuous consumption" for the landed class.[15] But this should not be allowed to obscure the effect of economic and social change on the occupational composition of the middle class. The figures for commerce in table 2.2. indicate an increase in this category. On the other hand, one has to be extremely cautious in drawing inferences, in view of possible shifts in classification procedures (especially for such designations as "clerk"); the figures probably also reflect boundary changes - whereas the 1881 occupation tables are for the Parliamentary Burghs, those for 1901 are for the Municipality, recently extended to include suburbs such as Portobello (see Appendix 2). But it is certainly true that Edinburgh became a centre of banking, insurance and allied activities, "engrossing all the top legal and much of the top financial business of a country which was...already achieving industrial and commercial eminence"[16]. Moreover, the growth of the professions, so often

[14] Census, 1901, III, p.xl. The "classes" referred to here are not comparable to my categories in table 2.2., and the per centages are based on total population, while mine are based on occupied population.

[15] J. Heiton, The Castes of Edinburgh, Edin., 1860, (2nd.edn.),p.37, refers to the continuing aristocratic practice of keeping town houses in the New Town. Cf. F. J. Fisher, "The Development of London as a Centre of Conspicuous Consumption in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries", Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, 4th series, 30, 1948.

[16] G. Best, Mid-Victorian Britain, 1851-75, London, 1971, p.49.

seen as distinguishing Edinburgh from most cities of comparable size, was itself in part a consequence of the development of industry and commerce, and of industrial and commercial middle class strata. Much of the business handled by Edinburgh lawyers must have been linked to the growth of Scottish industry and commerce: accountancy in Scotland, for example, was regarded originally as a branch of the legal professions.[17]

Industrial and commercial activity thus seem to have been of increasing importance to the middle class, whether through a direct effect on its occupational composition, or indirectly through the changing pattern of demand for those professional services in which the city specialised. But it is, as we have seen, difficult to measure from census figures such trends as the growth of white collar commercial occupations. For other middle class occupations developing in the nineteenth century it is still more difficult, even to make estimates. The industrial middle class (whether entrepreneurial, managerial or white collar) are rarely distinguished from manual wage-earners - and where they are this often means they are instead confused with retailers of the goods concerned. (Sometimes, of course, the functions of "maker" and "dealer" were combined in fact as well as in the census tables). The census figures, then, cannot take us far beyond impressionistic statements as to the changing composition of the local middle class. That its composition was indeed changing, that Edinburgh was unusual in the size and heterogeneity of its middle class is perhaps the firmest conclusion that we can draw. A section of the

17 A. M. Carr-Saunders and P. A. Wilson, The Professions, London, 1933, p.209.

professional middle class retained an identity linked to the traditional role of the city in national life, as a centre of law and administration, and a focal point in the social life of the landed class; other professional and business groups were associated with the economic changes of the Victorian period. The city's notorious snobbery seems to have derived from this heterogeneity of the wealthier classes and the social and political rivalries between various middle class strata. Heiton, writing in the mid-nineteenth century, characterised Edinburgh as a society of "castes", ranging from the "titular Lord to the Applewoman": the top professionals were grouped beneath the aristocracy, the merchants "stand between the Professionals and the Shopkeepers", while the latter are themselves "striving to be great in their shopocratic ... way". In the "war of energy and pride between caste and caste","the entrenchments become the firmer and firmer as you ascend"[18]. In the 1900's, Keith evokes a similar image of local society: the "Old aristocracy of Scotland", and "the modern professional aristocracy" were obliged to "tolerate... persons who have soiled their hands with trade, but are forgiven the offence on account of the trade having proved lucrative"[19]. Looking back over his lifetime, "J.B.S." comments on the changing life style and rising aspiration of the middle class:

[18] Heiton, op.cit., pp.4-7, 204.

[19] Keith, op.cit., pp.204-5.

> "The social conditions of the middle class, at least prior to the sixties, were simpler, less comfortable, and certainly less pretentious than those which prevail in a similar section of society now. Well-to-do tradesmen and other substantial members of the middle class were content to dwell in tenement houses of limited accommodation, generally consisting of only one public room for the family, a small number of bedrooms, and a kitchen with a dark closet, in which the single servant lassie slept."[20].

The status aspiration and rivalry involved in the rise of new middle class strata had an impact on political life in the city. Williams see the overthrow of the Whig "old guard" by a Liberal coalition as a challenge by business groups to the traditional dominance of an elite of lawyers.[21]

These tensions between groups of the middle and upper classes have important implications for the behaviour and attitudes of the organised working class. The formation ofaa working class movement occurred in the context of a community which was not dominated by a unified middle class elite, but rather by marked rivalries between different sections of the professional and business class. The most prominent sections of that class were

[20] "J.B.S.", Random Recollections and Impressions, Edin., 1903, privately printed, p.23.

[21] J. C. Williams, unpublished research: the author's thesis "Edinburgh Politics, 1832-52", Ph.D, Edin., 1972, which I have not had an opportunity to consult, is based on this research. I am indebted to Dr. Williams for allowing me to see an early draft of this work.

not directly involved in relations of production with the manual working class, but were engaged in the professions, wholesale and retail distribution, commerce and finance. The industrial structure was itself heterogeneous, with a considerable amount of smaller scale labour-intensive industry and a consequent diffusion of ownership. Religious cleavage was a further factor making for pluralism, especially after the Disruption[22]. The relationships of industrial employment did not figure prominently in local affairs: it is notable that industrial groups, whether employers or workers, are not included in the images of a "caste" society discussed above. Although it is certainly true that the growing organisation and consciousness of the working class brought industrial questions (for example, the legal status of unions in the 1870's) into local politics, working class activity and attitudes were themselves affected by the social and political rivalries between sections of the middle class.

iii. Occupational Structure: The Industrial Sector

The concentration of middle class groups in the city had a bearing on the distribution of industrial employment. Small scale crafts, catering for a "luxury" market constitued an important part of this employment:

> "Edinburgh ... has not, and never had, any considerable staple of produce for the supply of the general market. Her manufactures, perhaps, are more diverse, exhibit a larger aggregate of genius than those of any other great town; but some are of the common kinds for the supply of local wants, and therefore need not be mentioned, while

[22] Ibid.

the rest are all on so limited a scale as to require only the briefest notice."[23]

Local industry had a reputation, in keeping with the more general image of Edinburgh as a city "peculiarly free from the taint of the ledger and the counting-house,"[24] for high quality hand-made goods; in jewellry for example: "all the work done is of a superior kind, no attempt being made to vie with Birmingham in the production of cheap and showy articles, the beauty of which is as transient as that of a flower".[25]

The evidence of the census lends some support to this picture of the industrial structure; but a closer examination suggests important qualifications. We are again faced with the difficulties of interpreting Victorian censuses. The categories used for industrial occupations oscillate between industrial and occupational criteria. There are also a number of small changes in the occupations included under particular headings, which have to be disentagled by estimation procedures; and it is necessary to make assumptions as to the comparability of certain headings which change from census to census. In analysing the figures I have adopted Booth's scheme, as recently presented and developed by Armstrong,[26] to estimate the size of five major industrial groups.

23 Groome (ed.), op.cit., p.535.

24 Ibid., loc.cit.

25 Bremner, op.cit., p.131.

26 W. A. Armstrong, "The Use of Information about Occupation", in E. A. Wrigley (ed.), Nineteenth-century Society, Cambridge, 1972. I am indebted to the author for allowing me to consult an early draft of this paper. For full details and references, see Appendix 2.

Table 2.3.

Industrial Occupations as Per Centage of Total Occupied Population, Edinburgh, 1861-1901

A. Industrial Groups	1861	1881	1891	1901
1. Printing	4.28	4.57	4.45	4.42
2. Building	7.30	9.34	6.96	8.49
3. Engineering and Metals	4.19	3.93	4.02	4.49
4. Clothing	12.59	9.27	9.23	7.01
5. Transport	4.21	5.41	5.88	7.12
1. Printer	2.17	2.52	2.53	2.83
Bookbinder	1.48	1.55	1.31	1.15
Lithography	0.45	0.33	0.44	0.44
Other Printing	0.18	0.17	0.17	-
2. Mason	2.36+	1.97	1.26	1.66
Joiner	2.19	2.70	1.68	2.23
Painter	1.14	1.50	1.26	1.45
Slater, tiler	0.28	0.29	0.25	0.28
Plasterer	0.39	0.52	0.30	0.40
Plumber, gas-fitter	0.62	0.95	0.85	0.97
Building Labourer	-	1.03	0.97	1.06
Other Building	0.32	0.38	0.39	0.44*
3. Engineer	0.72	0.87	1.05	1.34
Blacksmith	1.39	0.99	0.81	0.81
Iron Manufacture	0.36	0.49	0.55	0.42
Brass Manufacture	0.89	0.78	0.71	0.61
Tinworker	0.33	0.38	0.38	0.37
Electrical apparatus	-	-	0.06	0.35
Other Engineering	0.50	0.42	0.46	0.59
4. Shoemaker	3.06	1.65	1.43	0.91
Tailor	2.33	2.32	2.24	2.04
Other Clothing ø	7.20*	5.30*	5.56*	4.06
5. Rail	0.86	1.39	1.78	1.98
Cabman, Coachman	0.71	0.47	0.43*	1.07
Carrier, Carter	0.88	1.30	1.44	2.02
Tramway	-	0.10	0.28	0.38
Messenger, Porter	1.76	2.15	1.95	1.67
B. Other Occupations				
Furniture Trades	2.28	1.95	1.34*	1.25*
Cooper	0.24	0.36	0.48	0.45
Other Wood	0.39	0.23	0.22	0.32
Leather	0.70	0.58	0.57	0.42

	1861	1881	1891	1901
Jewellry, Precious metals, watches, etc.	0.83	0.72	0.59	0.51
Baker	1.34	1.34	1.54	1.69
Brewer	0.32	0.57	0.77	0.54
Other Food and Drink	0.94	0.88*	1.16*	0.53
Papermaking	0.20	0.46	0.60	0.76
Typefounder	0.50	0.42	0.38	0.24
Coachmaker	0.47	0.35	0.32	0.29
Brushmaker	0.16	0.13	0.09	0.06
Glass	0.28	0.26	0.23	0.39
Rubber	0.33	0.54	1.17	0.82
Merchant Seaman	0.13	0.15	0.15	0.35
Stone Quarrier	0.12	0.10	0.11	0.17
Pavior, Road Labourer	-	0.10	0.11	0.17
Gas	0.22	0.27	0.29	0.37
General Labourer	2.31	1.90	2.62	1.63
Undefined Manufacturing	0.20	1.00	0.91	0.78

Source. Census, 1861, II, tables ser.III; Census, 1891, III pt.ii, tables ser.XV. 1881, 1901: See table 2.2. For full references to census, see above, footnote 2.

Notes. See Appendix 2 for classification scheme and procedures.

* Figures based partly on estimates: See Appendix 2.

\+ Probably includes masons' labourers: not strictly comparable to later figures.

ǵ Mainly female (i.e. seamstresses, dressmakers, etc.).

Part A1 of table 2.3 therefore gives totals and the more important individual occupations, for printing, building, engineering and metals, clothing and rail and road transport. Part B. of the table gives all occupations with 100 or more (0.09 per cent of occupied population) in 1881, some of these being combined for convenient presentation. In part A. the Armstrong scheme has been

modified by the exclusion of census designations definitely referring to employers (for example, "builder", as opposed to the specific building trades), and by a number of minor changes. Reference should be made to Appendix 2 for a fuller account of these procedures.

The figures certainly point to the importance of consumer crafts. Apart from building, clothing constitutes the largest industrial group throughout the period, while the furniture, leather, jewellry and coachmaking trades together account for a considerable proportion of industrial employment.[27] The local importance of a middle class consumer market is perhaps also indicated by the fact that domestic service was far larger than any industrial group (see above table 2.2). Large scale mechanised industry was correspondingly of less importance than in many cities of Edinburgh's size:

> "Edinburgh's heavy industry is composed largely of single firms of outstanding reputation in each sector. In that it differs from the concentration of similar firms which we find in large conurbations such as Clydeside or Birmingham"[28].

We must, however, qualify the picture of an occupational structure dominated by small scale consumer trades. Although this was an important sector, the proportion engaged in it declined over the four censuses, while that in the heavier industries - engineering, brewing,[29] rubber - either grew or remained stable.[30]

[27] See MacDougall, loc.cit.

[28] "The Edinburgh Story", Scotsman, special supplement, 25 April, 1960.

[29] The breweries almost certainly also account for the growing numbers of coopers, whom I have however placed with the woodworking trades in my table.

[30] The industries mentioned were all among the more capital-intensive sectors of local industry, as was printing: see below, ch.4,sect.i.

Moreover the importance of this sector to the local industrial economy was probably greater than its effects on the occupational structure: it included a number of leading firms with widespread markets. The same point applies to printing, which was probably more heavily concentrated in Edinburgh than in any other town, developing from its traditional role as an ancillary activity to the legal, administrative and literary life of the capital, to become an industry of far wider importance. Local firms included several leading publishers, and such specialised branches as Bartholmew, the map-makers. In the 1900's, publishers who had moved their offices South continued to use Edinburgh printing facilities.[31]

The growing importance of the more heavily capitalised industries with extra-local markets is brought out more clearly by changes in the absolute, rather than proportionate numbers employed. Table 2.4 indicates that the numbers of printers, engineers, engine-drivers, carters, rubber workers and brewers grew faster than total occupied population, while domestic service, tailors and cabinetmakers lagged behind, and shoemaking underwent an absolute decline. This suggests that, despite the local concentration of the consumer crafts, the larger scale industries were the more dynamic sector of the local economy. This point is reinforced when we consider the effects of female employment (much of it probably part-time) which was heavily concentrated in domestic service and the clothing trades. In 1881, building and engineering account for a considerably larger proportion of occupied males than of total occupied population,

[31] Keith, op.cit., p.10.

while clothing accounts for only six per cent of occupied males, compared to nine per cent of total occupied population.[32]

Table 2.4.

Per Centage Change in Numbers in Selected Occupations, 1861-1901

Total Occupied Pop. +94

Printer	+153	Domestic servant, general ≠	+60
Engineer	+285		
Engine-driver*	+544	Tailor	+69
Carrier, carter	+342	Shoemaker	-42
Rubber	+890	Cabinetmaker ø	+ 6
Brewer	+230		

Source. See tables 2.2 and 2.3

Notes. * Included in "Rail" in table 2.3.
ø Included in "Furniture Trades" in table 2.3.
≠ Included in "Domestic Service" in table 2.2.

The pattern of growth of the building industry must be separately considered. Here we find a fluctuation in the numbers employed, according to the movements of the building cycle. As table 2.3 indicates, there is a fall in 1891, following the depression of the 1880's, then a rise in 1901, following the boom of the 90's. (The 1911 census again shows the effects of the chronic slump of the preceding years, with a halving of the numbers of masons and masons' labourers since 1901.[33]).

[32] Industrial groups and domestic service, 1881:

	% of total occupied	% of males occupied
Domestic service	20.51	3.93
Printing	4.57	4.83
Building	9.34	14.71
Engineering	3.93	6.07
Clothing	9.27	5.89
Transport	5.41	7.98

[33] J.J. Cossar and A. Froude, "The Census Returns of Edinburgh", off-print in Edin. Public Library from the Blue Blanket. The building cycle is further discussed below, ch.3, sect.i.

We therefore find three types of pattern of occupational growth. The first type, old established handicrafts catering for the local "luxury" market, remained of considerable importance, distinguishing the pattern of industrial employment from that of more industrialised cities, such as Glasgow.[34] But an examination of the figures shows a marked tendency to a relative, and in some cases absolute decline in industries of this type. Employment in the second type, larger scale capitalised industry and transport, grew more rapidly, suggesting their relatively greater importance to the local industrial economy. Finally, the building industry shows a pattern of cyclical fluctuation in the numbers employed.

iv. The Study of the Working Class: A Comparative Perspective

The industrial working class in nineteenth century Edinburgh was thus marked by a considerable occupational diversity. A range of old established crafts catered for the large middle class consumer market, while newer, more capital intensive enterprises were geared to national and world markets. One feature common to many local industries was their high proportion of skilled labour. Shoemaking, tailoring, furniture and the other consumer trades were labour-intensive and - at least in the high quality bespoke sector - relied heavily on traditional craft skills transmitted by apprenticeship. Building was likewise marked by the persistence of craft methods. In printing and engineering the effect of technical change was to create new skills (for

[34] See MacDougall, loc.cit.

example, those of printing machinemen and engineering fitters) as well as to make more efficient and intensive use of older ones (for example, compositors and bookbinders)[35].

There was a considerable diversity in the industrial situation of skilled labour, while the changing importance of different industries, revealed by the analysis of the census figures, would lead to changes in the occupational composition of the working class. The analysis of class situation in the chapters which follow will adopt a comparative focus, concentrating on selected skilled trades (though other occupations will be considered where data are readily available). The occupations selected include important trades from all the industrial groups in part A of table 2.3, with the exception of transport. Printing, a key local industry, is represented by compositors, machinemen[36] and bookbinders; building by masons, joiners and painters; engineering by engineers[37] and ironmoulders;[38] clothing by shoe-

35 For production processes and work organisation in the various industries, see below, ch.4, sect.ii.

36 The two trades are quite distinct, though the census and many other sources regrettably fail to make the distinction, including both under the generic heading "printer".

37 The designation "engineer" does not occur in the census, but is of course widely used elsewhere, with reference mainly to fitters and turners, but sometimes also to millwrights, patternmakers, etc: I will be concerned with the two main engineering trades (fitters and turners), though it may not always be possible to draw the distinction. In tables 2.3 and 2.4 I combine the census category "Engine and machine maker" with "Fitter and turner".

38 The census does not distinguish the skilled moulders from other foundry workers. But see below, ch.4, sect.i, footnote 16 for an estimated breakdown.

makers. The reference is in all cases to adult male skilled workers, and not to semi and unskilled workers who may sometimes be covered by the same general title (for example, the census designations "printer" and "bookbinder" both comprise about 50 per cent semi skilled women).

A number of criteria determined this selection of trades. In the first place, it was obviously desirable to include the important sectors of local industry. Secondly, I have attempted to obtain a cross section of the range among skilled trades, in terms of class situation and of historical background (the presence or absence of craft traditions dating to before the Industrial Revolution). Finally, it was necessary to bear in mind the availability of documentary sources relating to trade unionism and other aspects of the various occupations. These three requirements have not in practice been incompatible. The previous section indicates the importance of the industries covered in this selection of occupational groups. The following chapters reveal a considerable range of variation in class situation, both between and within the trades. Finally, although the documentary material is far richer for printing than for other occupational groups, it nevertheless gives some picture for all the trades mentioned. The diversity of local industry, and the impact of changes in the economic and occupational structure thus facilitate a comparative analysis of class situation.

CHAPTER 3

CLASS SITUATION: ECONOMIC EXPERIENCES

Some account of the differences in class situation within the manual working class is clearly essential to an investigation of the labour aristocracy thesis. The present chapter will consider the differential material rewards arising from workers' situations in the labour market of Victorian Edinburgh: the next chapter will discuss their typical experiences of the social relations, technology and organisation of the production process itself. In both chapters it will be argued that the distribution of those advantages and deprivations that together make up class situation was patterned so as to differentiate a privileged upper stratum from the remainder of the working class. This proposition is, as I have argued, a necessary - though not a sufficient - precondition for the formation of a labour aristocracy.

To delineate fully the economic situation of the artisan it is necessary to make three sets of distinctions: that between skilled and unskilled labour; that between the various skilled trades; and that within certain of the trades. The first and second sets of distinctions are, in themselves, relatively poor predictors of the economic circumstances of any particular person. For, as Mayhew argued: "It becomes most important in speaking of wages, and in citing individual earnings, to state the portion of the trade for which the man is working, or else egregious blunders and confusion, and injustice, may be the result".[1]

[1] E. P. Thompson and E. Yeo (eds.), The Unknown Mayhew, London, 1971, p.472.

The economic differences within the working class are thus rather more complex than the familiar distinction between the artisan and the labourer. It is certainly true that skilled labour in general was advantageously placed, relative to the unskilled. But the evidence presented below suggests also a considerable range between and within the skilled trades themselves. Certain methodological problems are involved in the investigation of these issues. There is a considerable literature about standards of living during the nineteenth century. Much of the evidence presented in that literature is at what I shall call the "aggregate" level of analysis - that is to say, it gives data not broken down further than by occupation. This has been a result, partly of a necessary dependence on trade union or other reports of standard wage-rates, but also of a preoccupation with the construction of national indices, and with such "macroeconomic" issues as factor shares of the national income[2]. Whatever its other merits, this approach can help little in the understanding of class formation within a local setting: what matters, for this purpose, is the experience of identifiable individuals over their lifetimes.[3] We do not have the data to reconstruct that experience directly, but we can make informed guesses, provided

[2] See A. L. Bowley, Wages and Income since 1860, Cambridge, 1937; P. Deane and W. A. Cole, British Economic Growth, 1688-1959, Cambridge, 1967, 2nd. edition, ch.7 and sources there cited.

[3] One recent study which argues for an "age cohort" approach is R. S. Neale, "The Standard of Living, 1780-1844: a regional and class study", ECHR, 2nd.ser., 19, 1966.

we move from the aggregate level to a closer examination of the processes shaping the experience of men in particular occupations. The evidence is inevitably fragmentary, and the most that can be achieved is some picture of the rough location of different occupations in the economic hierarchy, and of the range of variation within the skilled working class as a whole, and within specific trades. We can, on the other hand, make use of statistical data relating to individual workers as a partial test of this account of the occupational distribution of economic advantages.

One further aspect is neglected in the following analysis, and must briefly be mentioned here: the movement of prices. Students of living standards have rightly been concerned to obtain reliable price indices.[4] In the present study, on the other hand, no effort has been made to estimate real, as opposed to money wages. The main reason for this is that the work of collecting local data for rents and retail prices did not seem justified, given the chronological scatter and dubious reliability of my figures for wages. The price history of the period should, however, be borne in mind - in particular, the cheapening of foodstuffs generally held to have contributed to improved real wages in the 1880's and 90's.[5] There is no special reason to suppose that working people in Edinburgh failed to benefit from this trend.[6]

[4] The various series are most conveniently accessible in B. R. Mitchell and P. Deane, Abstract of British Historical Statistics, Cambridge, 1962, pp.343-5, and ch.16.

[5] Ibid.; S. B. Saul, The Myth of the Great Depression, London, 1969, pp.30-2.

[6] It may be worth pointing out that a cheapening of basic foodstuffs is of greatest relative benefit to those with lower incomes: the relative improvement may therefore have been greatest for unskilled labour, despite the gains in money wages made by skilled trades, and possible widening of differentials. Conversely, the adverse effect of rising prices after 1896 was presumably more severe for the lower paid sections of the working class.

My attempt to reconstruct the economic situation of the skilled worker will therefore draw on three types of evidence. Section i of this chapter is concerned with various aggregate indicators, including wage-rates and hours of labour, industrial variations in the incidence of different types of economic fluctuations, and the effect of various other general factors, such as time - and piece-rate methods of payment. In section ii, on the other hand, I discuss the occupational experience of different skilled trades; the focus here is on the divisions within the trades, and the typical experience of men working in the different sections, seen within the perspective of economic and industrial changes. Finally, in section iii, I attempt to make some more rigorous test of this account of economic differences, by analysing two sets of statistical data for particular populations of manual workers: a panel study of earnings, based on samples from the wage books of firms; and data for the heights of children, collected originally during the winter of 1904.

i. Aggregate Indicators: Wage-rates

Figures for wage-rates for a "standard" working week are of some value, provided that they are used to open the enquiry, rather than to close it, and are interpreted in the light of other types of data. They give an easily obtainable comprehensive view of the positions of different occupations.

Table 3.1 shows the distribution of occupations, over the range of wage-rates for adult male workers in Edinburgh. (Here, as for most of the discussion, the interest is in the adult male whose wage was, in theory, intended to constitute the means of subsistence for a family; various figures for juvenile and

female labour have therefore been omitted from the calculation). The figures are based mainly, it would seem, on trade union returns: in some cases the weekly rate has evidently been computed by multiplying an hourly rate by the full working week. Thus, there is no allowance for cyclical movements in employment, or for the existence of casual labour markets and underemployment (except, of course, in so far as these tended to depress the standard rate itself). Interpretation is further complicated by the fact that many trades were on piece-work. (It is important to remember that such men were paid entirely by output, with no guaranteed minimum time payment). Any rate quoted for a "normal" week is likely to be especially problematic in the case of piece workers.

The main trend to emerge from this rather rough and ready form of analysis is of a distinct diminution in the bunching of occupations in the lower intervals, skilled trades disappearing entirely from the bottom quartile (with the exception of rail guards, firemen, and signalmen who are classified as skilled workers throughout this study). Again with the exception of railwaymen, there is a narrowing of the range within trades, as well as a more scattered distribution of rates for the different trades. (Such old established local crafts as coachmakers, jewellers, etc., for which later figures are not available, show an especially wide range in 1866-7).

Table 3.1.
Distribution of Standard Weekly Wage-rates, 1866-7 and 1890: Positions of Occupations by Quartile Intervals

1866-7

15s. to	21s.9d. to	28s.6d. to	35s.3d. to 42s.
Printer *			Printer *
	Mason Joiner		
Painter	Painter		
	Engineer +		
	Rail - driver		Rail - driver
Rail - fireman			
- guard		Rail - guard	
- porter			
- signalman			
Building labourer			
Carter			

1890

15s. to	22s.6d. to	30s. to	37s.6d. to 45s.
	Printer *		Printer *
		Mason ø Joiner ø Painter ø	
		Engineer +	
	Rail - driver		Rail - driver
Rail - fireman	Rail - fireman		
- guard	- guard		
- signalman		Rail - signalman	
- porter		- porter	
	Building lab. ø		
Carter	Carter		

Source. A. L. Bowley and G. H. Wood, "Statistics of Wages", Journal of the Royal Statistical Society, 1900 (building), 1905 (engineering); D. Bremner, The Industries of Scotland, Edin., 1869; Returns of Wages, 1830-86, PP 1887 LXXXIX; Report on the Strikes and Lock-outs of 1890, PP 1890-91 LXXXVIII, Appendix vi; General Report on Wages, PP 1893-94 LXXXIII, pt.ii.

N.B. All subsequent statements regarding wages or hours not otherwise supported rest on these sources.

Notes. _____: indicates range of rates for the occupation.
* Compositors and machinemen are not differentiated.
+ Fitter's and turner's rates (both rates fell in the same interval).
ø Summer hours.

These tendencies are perhaps a result of increased bargaining power and experience of the labour market. Hobsbawm sees the 1890's as a watershed in the history of wage-determination, when workers came increasingly to set their standards by what the market could bear, rather than by traditionalistic criteria.[7] The picture is amplified by an analysis of wage increases over the period. The largest per centage gain during 1866-90 was in the compositor's minimum, which rose from 20s. to 30s. This is, however, not a realistic measure, in view of the extent of piece-work in the trade - indeed the effect of gains on the "stab", or time-rate (covering all machinemen, but only a minority of compositors) was "further relative deterioration in the position of the Edinburgh piece worker".[8] The rise of 17 per cent at the mid point of the compositor's range, and 15 per cent

[7] E. J. Hobsbawm, "Custom, Wages and Work-load in Nineteenth Century Industry", in Labouring Men, op.cit., p.345, pp.350-1.

[8] S. C. Gillespie, A Hundred Years of Progress: the record of the Scottish Typographical Association, 1853 to 1952, Glasgow, 1953, p.66.

in the machinemen's rate is probably a realistic indication, with regard to the time-workers, though not to the majority of piece-working compositors. The building and engineering trades showed larger rises, ranging from 17 per cent (turner) to 26 per cent (mason, summer hours). These rates reflect cyclical movements. Both the mason's and engineer's rates had been still higher in the boom of the 1870's, and were to reach their maximum in the later 90's (see below diagram 3.1). The largest increase of all was in the building labourer's rate (30 per cent), the boom of 1889-90 being notable for increases gained by several groups of unskilled workers. Whatever the absolute gains of the building labourers, their relative position changed little: the differential narrowed in periods of depression and widened during the periodic building booms, especially that of the 1890's.

Economic fluctuations and unemployment:

The indicator of wage-rates has (even for the purposes of analysis at the aggregate level) to be qualified in several respects. The most obvious of these is the incidence of unemployment and under-employment.

It is now generally recognised that we must identify three cycles of investment and employment in order to chart the growth and fluctuations of the British economy: the cycles of building, home industry and overseas investment.[9] All three types of movement had effects on the level of employment in

[9] See, for example, W. H. B. Court, British Economic History, 1870-1914: Commentary and documents, Cambridge, 1965, pp.7-8.

Edinburgh. There were also marked seasonal patterns in certain local industries. It is best to consider separately the cyclical patterns of four sectors of the local industrial economy: building; capital goods; consumer goods; and printing. The cycles of building and the capital goods industries in Edinburgh appear to follow well-charted national movements. The 1870's saw an exceptionally strong boom, based on the interaction of investment in building and in capital goods. The collapse of the boom was followed by a period of acute depression in both sectors. The years from 1894 or 95 to the end of the decade were marked, again, by strong booms in both sectors, together constituting the "home boom of the 1890's".[10]

The building industry was also, of course, characterised by a marked seasonal variation in the level of activity. The wage (1890) for a winter week was below that for summer by 17 per cent (masons), 12 per cent (joiners) and 33 per cent (painters). And this is leaving aside the numbers laid off altogether for all or part of the winter, as also fluctuations due to the weather, rather than simply to the hours of daylight. The existence of this seasonal variation is a well known feature of the industry. It would, however, be a mistake to treat seasonality as a purely exogenous variable, outside the control of employers or workers, and thus to ignore its relationship to the strength of organisation and the history of collective bargaining. This relationship becomes apparent, whenever we con-

[10] E. M. Sigsworth and J. Blackman, "The Home Boom of the 1890's", Yorkshire Bull. of Economic and Social Research, 17, 1965.

sider the struggles of the various trades to limit the growth of a casual labour market. The painters, for example, were notoriously ill-organised, badly paid and diluted by unskilled labour; we find them alleging (in 1869) that the employers deliberately misled the public as to the best time of year to do painting work, thereby accentuating the seasonal pattern and encouraging the growth of a casual labour market.[11] The very well organised masons, on the other hand, took the lead in the nine hours' movement,[12] no doubt partly because they realised that any reduction in the discrepancy between summer and winter hours would limit the development of casual labour, and thus strengthen their general position. (It is worth pointing out here that not only did the hours of daylight in Scotland make for a more severe cut-back in winter, they also made possible very extensive systematic overtime in the long summer evenings). It is perhaps for the same reason that, even before the short time movement, we find a norm of punctillious observance of the standard working day: "It is a custom of the trade that a mason with his mell in the air will let it descend without hitting the chisel when he hears the first sound in the signal (to stop work)."[13] This bearing of collective organisation and the norms of occupational cultures on fluctuations in employment is pursued further in the

11 Ref., 13 Feb., 1869.

12 MacDougall (ed.), op.cit., p. xxxvii.

13 "The Condition of the Working Classes in Edinburgh and Leith", Edinburgh News, 2 Oct., 1852; all subsequent references to the Edinburgh News are to this series of articles.

examination of the experiences of different trades (below, section ii); it must, however, be noticed in any more general analysis of seasonal patterns.

The consumer goods industries are less well charted. The analysis of the local social structure in the preceding chapter suggested that they were oriented largely to middle and upper class markets. As the tailors' delegate pointed out, in an interesting contribution to a Trades Council discussion of the depression of the 1880's:

> "Minor Industries ... being to a large extent only such as supplied the wants within itself. At present very much funded money upon the Dividends from which Edinburgh mainly depended were not paying, whence the stagnation."[14]

If this diagnosis is correct, it indicates that effective demand in local consumer goods industries depended on the level of investment incomes. In Edinburgh such incomes probably had more to do with the cycles of overseas investment and building than of domestic industry. To substantiate this view is far beyond the scope of the present study. But there is some evidence for a pattern peculiar to the consumer goods sector:in 1885-6, for instance, the shoemakers and the tailors were reported to be thriving, while the ironmoulders reported heavy expenditure on out of work benefit.[15]

Tailoring and shoemaking were certainly susceptible to shorter run fluctuations. Stedman Jones has discussed the reasons for this with reference to the casual labour market in London. The

[14] T.C. Minutes, 18 Nov., 1884.

[15] Ibid., 21 April, 2 June, 29 Dec., 1885.

small amount of fixed capital in the consumer sector encouraged "the regulation of manufacture according to consumer demand", rather than stockpiling.[16] The concomitant of this was the casualisation and under-employment of a large part of the labour force. In tailoring, for example, it was normal to take on 30 or 40 men in the busy season, of whom only half a dozen would still be employed in the slack season.[17] The shoemakers, on the other hand, had no distinct seasonal pattern, but nevertheless suffered great variations in their earnings.[18] Here, as with the building trades, the incidence of fluctuation is bound up with organisation and bargaining power, the struggles of different trades to maintain their position in the face of cut-throat competition, casual labour and sweating. Thus the well-organised cabinetmakers (like the shoemakers and tailors a piece-working trade producing for the local consumer market) enjoyed relatively stable earnings.[19] As Mayhew noted, "wages depend as much on the distribution of labour as on the demand and supply of it";[20] violent short-run alternations of slack and busy trade would, by encouraging the growth of a casual and semi-employed work-force, drive down wages and conditions. The fact that workers were paid entirely by output meant that employers' costs (especially where they could resort to out-work) varied directly with the amount produced, rather than

16 G. Stedman Jones, Outcast London, Oxford, 1971, pp.33-4.

17 Edin. News, 12 March, 1853.

18 Ibid., 2 April, 1853.

19 Ibid., 14 May, 1853.

20 Thompson and Yeo (eds.), op.cit., pp.384-5.

with the size of the work-force; while at the same time they had every reason to create a work-force that was large, amorphous and difficult to organise. This was so especially where the various systems of out-work and sub-contract, generically labelled "sweating", exerted their influence.

Both piece-work and a certain amount of sweating were features of tailoring and shoemaking in Edinburgh. The tailors told the Select Committee on Sweating (1889) that, because of the limited extent of the ready-made trade in the city, "the very lowest class of sweating does not affect us directly";[21] but the system still existed, and was at one time resorted to by "almost every employer in the clothing trade", bespoke as well as ready-made.[22] Out-work prices were said to be 25 to 30 per cent lower.[23] The shoemakers worked entirely on an out-work basis until employers in the "honourable" trade (i.e. those who recognised an agreed list of prices) provided workshops, apparently in the 1860's.[24] Thus, the short-term fluctuation in demand characteristic of the clothing and shoe trades was compounded by the sweating system, casual labour, weak organisation and a consequent downward pressure on wages and conditions.

It remains to consider the cyclical pattern of the printing industry. This appears to have been relatively unaffected by the cycles of economic activity so far considered. There was apparently a period of dislocation, fierce competition and rapid

[21] S. C. Sweating, PP 1889 XIV, pt.i, Q 26517 (N. M'Lean, Scottish National Assoc. of Operative Tailors).

[22] Edin.B., Scottish National Assoc. of Operative Tailors, The Sweating System in Edinburgh, n.d.

[23] S. C. Sweating, op.cit., Q 26520. [24] N.B. 18 Aug., 1863.

structural change, marked by such legal changes as the abolition of monopolies in bible printing in the 1840's, and the better known repeal of the "taxes on knowledge" in the 50's and 60's.[25] This was also the period of the capitalisation of the industry, of the emergence of Edinburgh as a printing centre with wide-spread markets, and the growing dominance of certain leading firms (many of which are still in existence). There is little evidence of cyclical movements in employment after the period of structural change. There was, on the other hand, a distinct seasonal pattern, though perhaps less sharp than in building or tailoring. Again this was compounded by a problem of casual labour among piece compositors.

Table 3.2.
Per Centage of Skilled Trades Unemployed, 1893
(based on estimates by union secretaries)

Printing	2.4	Clothing and shoe	1.0
Building *	6.5	Cabinet and furniture	7.1
Iron and Engineering	8.6	Miscellaneous	5.7

Source. Per centages given in J. Mallinson, Statistics Bearing on the State of Employment ... in ... Edinburgh, December, 1893.

* The figures are for winter.

The foregoing discussion would lead us to expect recurrent cyclical unemployment in engineering and building, seasonal unemployment in building and printing, and casual labour and under-employment in the clothing and shoe trades and among compositors in printing. The only figures found for unemployment are shown in table 3.2. The figures were collected from trade unions during the depression of 1893, and are, as the author points out, an

25 S. Kinnear, Reminiscences of an Aristocratic Edinburgh Printing Office, Edin., 1890, p.31; S.T.C., Nov. 1861.

under-estimate, since "the members of the Union are the best and steadiest workmen, and consequently the best employed."[26] Whatever their drawbacks, the figures show the heavier incidence of the depression in engineering. The unemployment in building, on the other hand, is disproportionately due to the painters (other building trades 3.5 per cent). Moreover, the figures undoubtedly hide a good deal of concealed unemployment in the clothing and shoe trades: "The condition of the Tailoring and Shoemaking trades has not been so depressed for a number of years, and although there are few men absolutely without work there is a large number who are only half employed."[27] Similarly, the incidence of unemployment (as opposed to under-employment) was greater among the time-working machinemen than the piece-working compositors. Although the main figures regrettably are not broken down further than by industry, skilled workers registered as unemployed (in a procedure designed to supplement the trade union information, mainly with regard to unskilled workers) included 15 machinemen and only 2 compositors, whereas we know that compositors comprised three quarters or more of the labour-force in the two departments combined.[28] This is borne out for an earlier period by data from the records of a prominent printing firm in the city, Messrs. T. & A. Constable. Of 14 workers (journeymen, apprentices and boys) in the press and machine department who left the firm during 1833-56, 10 were laid off because of slackness in trade, but only one of 10 com-

26 J. Mallinson, Statistics Bearing on the State of Employment ... in ... Edinburgh, December, 1893.

27 Ibid.

28 Ibid, For the proportion of employees in the two departments, see below, ch.4, table 4.2.

positors leaving went for this reason[29] (it should, however, be pointed out that the press and machine department included semi and unskilled as well as skilled workers).

Table 3.3.
Numbers of Paupers from Occupations, Edinburgh County 1871, as Per Centage of Total in those Occupations (Average of 1861 and 1871)

Over 1.5%		1.0 to 1.5%	
Building labourer	8.1	Cabinetmaker)	1.4
Messenger, porter	2.5	Baker)	
Shoemaker	2.4	Watchmaker)	
Painter	2.2	Sawyer)	
General labourer)	2.1	Cooper)	1.3
Plumber)		Litho printer)	
Tin worker)	2.0	Blacksmith)	
Slater)		Brassfounder)	
Iron manuf. *	1.9	Boilermaker)	1.2
Typefounder	1.8	Carter)	
Tailor)	1.7	Joiner)	
Printer **)		Bookbinder)	1.1
		Tanner)	
		Engineer	1.0

Less than 1.0%	
Glass worker)	0.9
Mason)	
Goldsmith etc.	0.6
Plasterer	0.4
Coachmaker	0.2

Source — Census of Scotland, 1871, vol.III, PP 1873, LXXIII.

* Probably includes various other groups of foundry workers, as well as the skilled ironmoulders.

** Like all census figures, this regrettably fails to distinguish compositors and machinemen.

29 "List of Parties Employed at 11 Thistle Street, 1835-56" MS notebook, among records of T. & A. Constable Ltd.

A further measure is provided by the incidence of pauperism in different occupations. The census of 1871 gives a table showing the "Former or Present Occupations of the Paupers in the County of Edinburgh" (i.e. the county now known as Midlothian: 80 per cent of the population lived in Edinburgh and Leith in 1871). The table is rather vague as to definitions (it is not, for example, clear whether those counted in it are also counted in the main census occupation tables according to their "present or former occupations"). More serious, however, is the possibility that the numbers in certain occupations (unskilled workers and those skilled trades diluted by un-apprenticed labour) may be inflated by the fact that men originally in other occupations entered them immediately prior to going on poor relief. The age structure of different occupations may also have an effect; for example, the difference between masons and joiners may simply reflect the fact that masons' work was heavier and less healthy and men therefore had to leave the trade at an earlier age, whereas in the joiners' trade "old men are often preferred"[30]. The table is nevertheless of some interest (if only in that the fact that certain occupations may have been the second-to-last resort of the pauperised is, in itself, an indicator of their condition).

With theexception of carters (and possibly sawyers, whose skill level is something of a borderline case, though they will be classified as semi skilled for the purposes of this study), the unskilled occupations fall, as was expected, near the top of the list; so do the painters and the shoemakers. While the

30 Edin. News, 2 Oct., 1852; O. Gordon, A.Handbook of Employments, Aberdeen, 1908, p.177: I am indebted to Professor T. C. Smout for the loan of his copy of this useful source.

masons, joiners, engineers all fall towards the bottom. Comparing this distribution with that for unemployment (admittedly at a later date) confirms the view that the level of employment in the short-run is less critical than the varying capacity of trades to resist the growth of a casual labour market. For it is predominantly those trades marked by problems of casual and/or sweated labour (most notably the shoemakers and painters) that had the higher proportions of men obliged to turn to the last resort of the Victorian poor.

Hours, methods of payment:

The period saw a general shortening of hours. The masons took the lead in this, winning the nine hour day (or 51 hour week: nine hours and six on Saturday) in 1861; this was then quickly extended to the other building trades. The engineering and metal workers won the 51 hour week in 1872, but this was lengthened to 54 hours during the depression.[31] The printing trades won the 54 hours in 1871 (but failed to gain another reduction in a bitter strike the following year), with further reductions in the 1890's (especially among the more favoured sections, such as lithographers and bookbinders). Significantly, we know less about hours in tailoring or shoemaking. Those shoemakers in workshops worked a ten hour day in 1872.[32] In general, piece-workers' hours fell less than time-workers'. According to the Webbs, the press and machinemen broke away from the Edinburgh Typographical Society because they "did not pull well together with the comprs.(sic) (piece workers) who wanted hours as they were whilst machinemen (time workers) wanted them reduced"[33].

31 T.C. Minutes, 20 Aug., 1877, 12 Sept., 1878.

32 Edin. Operative Cordwainers Society, To the Master Boot and Shoemakers, 1872, Webb 8.119.xxv.

33 S and B. Webb, MS notes, Webb A.7.ii.

As with wages we know more about standard rates than about actual earnings, so with hours we know more about the standard working week than about actual hours worked. At the Royal Commission on Labour (1892) the engineers complained that 71.7 per cent of A.S.E. members in Edinburgh were in shops which worked systematic overtime at boom periods; whereas the masons and joiners reported little overtime working.[34] The significance of overtime is to some extent ambiguous. On one hand the fact of heavy overtime working may modify the picture presented by visible improvements in the level of consumption; we know little moreover of the extent to which overtime was compulsory (though the probability is that in most cases it was at this period). On the other hand overtime may have been welcomed (despite the condemnation of most unions) in view of the higher earnings. Newspaper compositors received higher rates, and their jobs were sought after, despite the night work involved.[35]

Table 3.4.
Methods of Payment in Edinburgh Skilled Trades

	Piece	Time
Printing:	Most compositors	Some compositors Machinemen
	Some bookbinders	Most bookbinders
Building:		All
Engineering:	Brass workers Various metal trades (meter making, possibly rail workshops)	Engineers Smiths Ironmoulders

[34] R.C. on Labour, group A, PP 1892 XXXVI, pt.iii, appendix xlvi, special report by the A.S.E.; group C, PP 1892 XXXVI, pt.ii, Q 17977, Q 17646.

[35] Edin. News, 25 June, 1853.

	Piece	Time
Clothing:	Tailors Shoemakers	
Wood and Furniture:	Cabinetmakers Coopers	
Other:	Curriers (possibly other leather trades) Some coachmakers Glass workers	Some coachmakers Jewellry and precious metals
	Some type-founders Combmakers (rubber factory)	Some type-founders

Source: Mainly as for table 3.1: otherwise miscellaneous references in trade union sources, etc.

One further general factor must be considered before leaving the "aggregate" level of analysis: the system of payment. Piece-work existed in two sorts of situation. First, in handicrafts with stable technologies, high labour costs and market conditions subject to seasonal or other short-run fluctuations. Second, in larger scale, more heavily capitalised industries, where the product was standardised to such an extent as to allow of piece-work. In the latter case the system is associated with standardisation, in the former with its absence. This point is illustrated in the table: the piece-work trades include the clothing trades (which belong to the category of labour-intensive handicrafts) and workers in such capital-intensive industries as glass and metal working.[36]

The implications of piece-work depend partly on which of these two categories is applicable to the specific case, but also on the general bargaining strength of the groups involved. Thus the

[36] For measures of capitalisation in different industries, see below, ch.4, table 4.1.

cabinetmakers, despite belonging to the category of handicraft consumer industries, were apparently among the more favoured skilled trades, and enjoyed fairly regular earnings.[37] Piece-work, then, was either a means of minimising employers' costs, and maintaining a flexible (and therefore to some extend casual and under-employed) labour-force, to meet short-run fluctuations in demand, or, in larger scale enterprises, a solution to problems of managerial control.[38] In both cases, it also functioned to simplify costing, at a period when this was still based on "custom, empiricism, or short-term calculation"[39].

Attitudes to piece-work were conditioned by these different experiences of the system. When the matter was raised at the Trades Council the printers' delegate (no doubt thinking of the piece-working compositors) declared that the piece system "tended to Keep Down men in every form", whereas the tailors and cabinetmakers defended the system, and the shoemakers complained of inequities in the rates. The engineering trades condemned piece-work (as was the policy of their unions).[40] Piece-systems were therefore judged according to whether they were believed to secure for particular trades their expected norm of "a fair day's work for a fair day's wage". As the saddlers' delegate put it, the system was acceptable "wherever the men were able to enforce their claim to have A Voice in the setting of the Piece Prices."[41]

[37] See above, footnote 19.

[38] See S. Pollard, The Genesis of Modern Management, Harmondsworth, 1968, pp.222-4; Hobsbawm, "Custom, Wages and Work-load", op.cit., pp.352-3.

[39] Hobsbawm, "Custom, Wages and Work-load", p.345.

[40] T.C. Minutes, 15, 22 Feb., 1876. The A.S.E. report to the R.C. on Labour (above, footnote 34) showed little piece-work in Edinburgh.

[41] Ibid., 15 Feb., 1876.

On the other hand, the introduction of a particular system does have some independent bearing on the positions of trades. It might powerfully reinforce the growth of the casual labour market - as one of Mayhew's informants said had been the effect of piece-work on the London tailors.[42] Although the piece trades do not have the same history of wage reductions and recurrent large disputes as the engineering or building trades, there was undoubted scope for employers to exert pressure in other ways, altering the interpretation of the agreed lists (which were often extremely complicated), manipulating the classification and allocation of work, and so on. While the combination of piece-work with casual labour and sweating weakened the capacity to resist, "causing jealousy and ill feeling in every instance and often causing men to bring themselves to the level of Slavery."[43] Thus, although (as we have seen) the incidence of unemployment and fluctuation in the official rate of wages was most severe in the time-working trades, the piece system was often associated with a more insidious pressure on weakly organised trades. Moreover in those trades where piece-workers were the best paid section this may be partly because the employer's offer of piece-work had to be competitive with the going time-rate - in effect, to provide that guaranteed minimum that was totally lacking in the clothing trades and among the piece-working majority of compositors.

[42] Thompson and Yeo (eds.), op.cit., p.186

[43] T.C. Minutes, 15 Feb., 1876: the speaker's trade has not been identified.

Conclusions:

A number of points emerge from the foregoing discussion of aggregate indicators, which may be summarised as follows:

1. There was a marked improvement over the period in the standard wage-rates of most skilled workers; skilled trades (apart from railwaymen, who had a unique "labour hierarchy") disappear from the bottom quartile of the range of standard wage-rates (table 3.1). Figures for standard wage-rates also suggest that certain trades (such as masons and engineers) enjoyed a somewhat advantaged position, relative to skilled labour generally. It should also be noted that many trades were on pure piece-rates (for example, the majority of compositors), and that it is impossible to give any very meaningful figure for a standard rate in such cases.

2. Cyclical fluctuation was most severe in building and engineering. Building workers also suffered from a marked seasonal variation. Printing, tailoring and consumer trades generally likewise had seasonal cycles, though for different reasons and with different patterns than in building; shoemakers had great fluctuations in employment, but with no systematic seasonal pattern. Statistics of pauperism (table 3.3) and other evidence suggest that trades affected by casualisation and under-employment - generally related to short-run fluctuations - were more precariously situated than those affected by the more often discussed cycles of investment in capital goods and building.

3. There was a general shortening of hours, especially in building. Here again, though, the improvement is less marked in the small scale handicrafts (such as shoemaking) and among piece-workers generally.

4. Systems of payment thus have some bearing on the economic position of a particular trade. Piece-work existed where there was either a small amount of fixed capital and great variations in output and product (as in clothing, furniture trades, etc.); or where a large capital investment and the mass production of standardised products encouraged the use of piece-work as a solution to problems of managerial control and work organisation (as in some metal-working plants). The general bargaining strength of the trade was a more important factor than the system of payment as such, but piece-work might accentuate under-employment and the growth of the casual labour market.

Given the nature of the evidence used, these conclusions can be only tentative. Their main value is in posing more clearly problems which must be approached by a more detailed comparative analysis of the development and structure of occupational groups - and especially of the degree of differentiation <u>within</u> trades.

ii. Occupational Experiences

The discussion of aggregate measures has helped identify certain important variables - unemployment, the degree of casualisation, the mode of payment. But the incidence of these factors was the

effect, as well as the cause of the bargaining positions of different trades; those positions were affected by structural change, and by the strength of collective organisation. The impact of fluctuation and change was, moreover, variable within the trades. Every trade contained, on one hand, a more or less extensive body of men who could expect to find themselves in full employment only at the busiest times; and, on the other, an elite who could expect to remain on the pay-roll even at the slackest times. The economic experience of the artisan cannot be understood without some account of these differences. In this section I attempt to give such an account, for the skilled trades selected for comparative analysis.[44]

Compositors:

The compositor's old established handicraft was among those multiplied, rather than destroyed by the Industrial Revolution. The expanding output of all sorts of printed matter was associated with the introduction of the steam-powered press, which expanded demand for the labour-intensive craft skills required to set up the type. These skills had long been distinct from the pressman's branch of the trade; indeed the compositors - perhaps because of the educational requirements of their job - seem traditionally to have been considered the superior branch.[45] (This superiority is perhaps reflected in the formation in the 1820's of a separate Compositors' Friendly Society, based on actuarial principles, following the secession of compositors from an "unsound" Society which had included both branches of the trade).[46] Recollections

[44] The reader may find it helpful to refer to the accounts of production processes in the various trades discussed (below, ch.4, sect.ii).

[45] See Cannon, op.cit., p.56.

[46] L. Fleming, An Octogenerian Printer's Reminiscences, Edin., 1893, pp. 21-2.

of the earlier nineteenth century give a picture of relative economic stability and recognised social status: compositors got 10 s. weekly, and the balance of their piece earnings every third week; "the almost used-up human material of the establishment" were kept employed, although "their wages must have formed a considerable deduction from the profits of the concern"[47].

With the expansion, capitalisation and growing scale of the industry the compositor's position became less secure. Printing, like other consumer industries, suffered the vicissitudes of seasonal production (an added seasonal factor being the stimulus to demand of the law courts, government work and the annual Assemblies of the Church of Scotland[48]). Unlike most consumer trades, however, the printing industry contained a considerable amount of fixed capital, with the introduction of steam presses, and increasingly also of purpose built factories. The fixed capital tied up in the machine room, and the bargaining power which, as we shall see, accrued to the machineman from his high productivity and mastery of a rapidly changing technology, meant that the "regulation of manufacture according to consumer demand"[49] bore most heavily on the labour-intensive composing room - an arrangement facilitated by the fact that most compositors were paid according to output.

It seems reasonable to suppose that the economic pressures affecting the compositor arose from the employer's attempts to cut wage-costs in the labour-intensive part of the printing process, and adjust them as nearly as possible to fluctuations in

[47] Kinnear, op.cit., pp.17,30.

[48] See regular reports on the state of trade in the Scottish Typographical Circular; for statistical evidence of the seasonal cycle in printing, see below, table 3.8, diagram 3.2.

[49] Stedman Jones, op.cit., p.33.

the market for his product. This involved a decline in the compositor's position, relative to the skilled machineman (who largely replaced the old hand pressman). The Typographical Circular remarked that "the remuneration of pressmen and machinemen considered as a class is unquestionably higher than that of compositors", drawing the moral that machinemen were on time rates.[50] Several means of cutting wage-costs were open to employers. These means, and the threat they posed to the earnings and security of the compositor are summarised in a memorial in support of a wage claim (1891): "The position of the Piece Compositor has for years been one of peculiar hardship. Subject to all the vicissitudes of a fluctuating trade, his precarious and uncertain earnings have been further endangered by the more general adoption of the 'Stab system, the large increase of Apprentices, and the introduction of Female Labour"[51].

The first means, then, was the casualisation of a section of the labour-force. As the 'stab (or time-rate) was used more extensively (but still, apparently, only for a minority of favoured regular employees) so the fluctuations in trade bore more heavily on the piece-workers: "the printing trade in Edinburgh has suffered very severely so far as regular employment is concerned to journeymen - those that are in piece work, at any rate"[52]. This tendency was accentuated by the effect of the 'stab system on work allocation - a matter of vital importance to the

[50] S.T.C., Dec., 1860.

[51] Edinburgh Typographical Society, To the Master Printers of the City of Edinburgh, 1891, Webb B.119.xxxvi.

[52] R.C.Lab. group C,PP 1893-4 XXXIV, Q 23175 (A. Ross, secretary, Edin. Typo.Soc.).

piece-working compositor. A complicated scale of prices, held in reverence by many union activists, was regarded as the piece-working compositor's charter of rights and privileges:[53] "extras" for such things as footnotes, passages in foreign languages, and so on were designed to ensure that the worker was adequately rewarded for the more demanding and time-consuming kinds of work. The advantage of the 'stab from the employer's point of view was that he could allocate the more lucrative items on the piece scale (the "fat") to time-workers, thereby evading the spirit, if not the letter of the scale. As a result, "you will find one section of the men continually kept setting the 'rubbish' of the house, while others, with perhaps less ability, are lolling in fat of all kinds; and beyond that, the same is true when slackness settles down, it is the poor victims of the rubbish-heap who are the first for the slate and are kept longest there"[54]. The North Briton drew the contrast, in a caustic comment on the dinner held to celebrate gains won in 1862: "In the Rainbow Hotel we find fifty printers faring sumptuously, and in the Strangers' Friend Society we find other fifty printers fasting grievously"[55]. The casualisation of a part of the labour-force was thus associated with a marked polarisation within the trade.

53 The scale, and the compositors' attachment to it are recurring themes in the columns of the Typo.Circular: for example, editorial, Jan., 1862.

54 S.T.C., Jan., 1898, editorial, quoting from reader's letter (the "slate" is trade jagon for being paid off).

55 N.B., 5 April, 1862.

The question of work allocation also entered into the threat posed to the compositor's position by apprentice and female labour. The older apprentices might be used as cheap labour, and work allocation might be manipulated to this end.[56] More generally, of course, unregulated recruitment to the trade might intensify the process of casualisation. According to the Webbs, union apprenticeship rules were not effectively enforced.[57] It is hard to gauge exactly the extent of apprentice and other male juvenile labour,[58] since the census never distinguishes compositors from machinemen: 36 per cent of males in the census category "printer" were aged under 20 in 1861, falling to 29 per cent in 1881 and 1891, and 15 per cent in 1901.[59] This is certainly somewhat higher than for the other skilled trades examined for the first three of the censuses - but it must be remembered that the figures include machine room workers, some of whom were semi skilled boys rather than apprentices. Women were employed in type setting during and after the strike of 1872; although they did not displace men on any large scale (being confined to certain simpler kinds of work), they must certainly have taken work from the piece-working compositor, and their introduction figured, as we have seen, in his list of grievances.[60]

56 The dispute which eventually closed the Scotsman office to unionists arose from grievances about the allocation of copy to apprentices: S.T.C., Sept., 1872.

57 MS notes, Webb A.7.ii.

58 The term "boys" is used throughout this study to refer to male teenage employees; the term "apprentices" is used to refer only to those male teenage employees known to be undergoing training for some skilled occupation.

59 This, and all subsequent statements about the age distribution of occupations is of course based on census occupation tables: for full references see below, ch.2, footnote 2, and sources for tables 2.2 and 2.3.

60 J.R. MacDonald (ed.), Women in the Printing Trades, London, 1904, pp. 45-8.

The compositor, then, worked at a trade marked by seasonal fluctuations, a pressure to minimise wage-costs and to adjust them to the variable level of demand, casualisation of an appreciable part of the labour-force, and relatively ineffective control on the recruitment of additional labour. In the 1890's he also felt threatened by technical change. For the last decade of the century saw the introduction of the first really viable type setting machines, the linotype and monotype: "Battle seems to be very near at hand - compositors v. machines of all sorts and sizes, headed by the linotype."[61] The Typographical Circular noted the dangers of the "iron compositor", and "uneasiness and displacement of labour"[62]. Related to these fears was a sharp struggle over rates and conditions on the new machines, as the union sought to make them as expensive as possible, and to ensure that their operation would be the prerogative of time-served compositors. Although fears of widespread technological unemployment proved groundless - the machines were anyway at first confined mainly to news work - the impact of the new machines cannot be ignored, given the background of a casual labour market, weak controls on recruitment and disadvantageous methods of work allocation.

Machinemen:

Until the final decade of the century the compositor worked in a stable technological environment. The machinemen, by contrast, belonged to the group of skilled occupations created by the Industrial Revolution. The new expertise demanded by the steam-powered printing press, the great increase in productivity

[61] Kinnear, op.cit.p. 32. [62] S.T.C., Jan., 1896, May, 1896.

associated with its advent, and the relatively small numbers of skilled machinemen placed them in a strong bargaining position. The process of change was a continuing one, with the steady proliferation of more efficient and specialised types of machine. As one technical handbook commented: "When a new class of machinery is introduced into an office one of the greatest difficulties the employer has is to get a careful man who is competent to take charge of it"[63]. Thus, in 1892, the machinemen claimed a rise on the ground of increasing productivity, the "size and speed of machinery", and the high value of the plant for which they were responsible.[64]

As the machinemen took advantage of this strategic situation, their economic position compared more and more favourably with that of most compositors. Following the failure of the strike of 1872 a number of machinemen acceded from the Typographical Society, to form the Edinburgh Press and Machinemen's Society;[65] its Annual Report for 1893 referred to the higher benefits paid - presumably a reflection of the greater prosperity of the membership, relative to that of the Typographical Society - and to the recent gain of a standard rate of 32 s. for a 52½ hour week.[66] There is, moreover, little sign of that uncontrolled acquisition of the skills of the trade from which the compositors suffered. Boys were apparently taken on in the first place as semi skilled labour for machine feeding, etc., apprentices being later selected from among these boys.[67]

63 "Old Machine Manager", The Printing Machine Manager's Complete Handbook and Machine Minder's Companion, London, 1889, p.viii. (The term "machine manager" in printing refers to skilled manual workers, not managers in the usual sense).

64 Edin. Press and Machinemen's Society, Memorial to the Master Printers of Edinburgh and District, Webb B.119.xxxviii.

65 S.T.C., Jan., Feb., 1874. 66 Edin.Press and Mach.Soc., AR,1892-3.

67 Gordon, op.cit., p.313.

There must have been some danger of a dilution of the trade with men who had picked it up as boys, without serving the regular apprenticeship. But various factors would, one may assume, have enabled the machinemen to limit any such tendency. In the first place, as the direct supervisors of the semi skilled boys they must surely have had some influence on the selection of apprentices and the process of training, as well as on the skills which non-apprentices were permitted to acquire. Secondly, the context of rapid technical change, and the fact that training on the latest machines was probably available only in the larger centres meant that an influx of men who had served apprenticeships in weakly unionised country towns - from which the compositors, like many other trades, suffered[68] - was a less serious problem. Moreover, the increasing replacement of boys by women in the semi skilled machine processes must have strengthened the position of the skilled men, since there was clearly no danger of women picking up the trade and passing themselves off as competent skilled men.[69]

The machinemen therefore enjoyed an advantageous, and improving position based on technical change and their monopoly of the scarce knowledge and skills needed to operate the new types of machine. They seem, moreover, to have been relatively homogeneous in this respect: there is little evidence of the kind of variation in experience between different groups of workers, so important for compositors and many other skilled trades. We may therefore place the machinemen among the group of unusually advantaged skilled occupations.

[68] Ibid., p.316.

[69] According to the secretary of the Lithographer's Society, female labour was preferrable in machine-feeding, etc., presumably for this research: R.C.Lab., group C, PP 1893-4 XXXIV, Q 22699. The proportion of female printers in Edinburgh rose from two per cent (1861) to 31 per cent (1901): these figures, of course, reflect the employment of female compositors, as well as employment in the machine room.

Bookbinders:

Bookbinding, like type setting, was an old established craft. Unlike type setting, it was mechanised, rationalised and sub-divided from the mid nineteenth century.[70] With the growing scale of book production a series of machines were introduced, and many operations were simplified, so that they could be performed by semi skilled labour; more than half of the total in bookbinding and folding were female in 1861, and this had risen to 67 per cent by 1901. The effect of this process was not, however, to displace skilled men, but to make more efficient and specialised use of them.

The concomitant of this is that the bookbinders were able to regulate their numbers, so as to take advantage of the more specialised use of their craft skills and the productivity gains from innovation. Males in bookbinding rose by 24 per cent, 1861-1901, compared to 55 per cent for all bookbinders, and 94 per cent for total occupied population; the proportion of males under 20 fell from 30 per cent in 1861 to 23 per cent in 1881 and 16 per cent in 1901. There is some more direct evidence of the operation of apprenticeship controls: union minutes record the inspection of new members' indentures.[71] The sub-division of processes and introduction of semi skilled labour meant that job demarcation, as well as entry to the trade, was of importance to the skilled bookbinder. A national delegate meeting (1895) expressed "a great

[70] For further discussion, see below, ch.4, sect.ii.

[71] Edin. Union Society of Journeymen Bookbinders, Minutes, 1822-72; Edin.B., Bookbinders Consolidated Union, Minutes, from 1869.

amount of surprise" at the extent of female labour in Edinburgh and the classes of work allocated to the women, and declared this state of affairs to be "a great danger to the whole union"[72]. And there are a number of instances of small strikes over "encroachments" by female labour.[73]

Despite these threats the bookbinders seem to have succeeded in retaining a strong position. In 1853 the Edinburgh News described them as a "comfortable looking class of workmen .... everything about them seemed to indicate steadiness in the work-shop and comfort at home"[74]. Statistics given in the union minutes for a later date bear out this impression, showing relatively high wage-rates and - more important - relatively few men at very low rates. The average rate for union members in 1885 was 28s. 9d., while 57 per cent were reported to earn from 28s. to 36s.; in 1890 66 per cent of journeymen bookbinders (unionists and non-unionists combined) were above the minimum rate of 27s. (51 per cent at 30s. or more), and 15 per cent were below the minimum.[75] These figures suggest that the bookbinders were among the relatively prosperous trades.

Masons:

The masons likewise appear to have enjoyed a strong and improving position during the period. (After its end, however, they were badly affected by the building depression of the 1900's and by the introduction of stone cutting machines[76]). There was little

[72] Edin.B., Bookbinders Consolidated Union, Minutes, 18 June 1895.

[73] For example, ibid., 28 Nov., 1874. [74] Edin. News, 30 July, 1853.

[75] Bookbinders C.U. Minutes, 28 Sept., 1885, 7 Oct., 1890. The figures exclude a small number of piece-workers.

[76] Gordon, op.cit., p.165; R.C. on the Poor Laws, PP 1910 XLVIII, App.vol.viii, Q 197181 (Law Agent, Edin. Distress Committee). Cf. the data for masons in 1904: below, table 3.10; ch.5, table 5.1.)

change in the technology of building during the period, and the skilled stonemason continued to play a key part in that technology. The exceptional strength, as well as the traditional craft skills required for mason work created a scarcity of labour during the upswings of the construction cycle.

After 1860 the masons did not attempt to control entry to the trade: any man could join the union, "as soon as he can leave first employer"[77]. Despite the absence of regulations, only between nine and 12 per cent of masons were aged under 20 at the various censuses. The physique needed for the work, and informal occupational socialisation and selection in the workplace may well have functioned as controls on recruitment, even in the absence of more formal arrangements. The pursuit of a closed shop policy, reported to the Royal Commission on Labour, presumably also reflects a measure of control over labour recruitment.[78]

Like all the building trades, masons were affected by the movements of the building cycle, and by seasonal fluctuations. At times of depression a surplus of labour tended to appear. A union leaflet of 1885 complains that the masons are loosing their leading position among the skilled trades.[79] The hourly rate fell from a peak of 9d. in 1876 to 6d. in 1880, rising again to 7d. in 1888, then to 9½d. in 1896, remaining at that level for the boom years of the later 90's.[80] The impact of these movements on the

77 MS notes, Webb A.7.ii.

78 R.C.Lab., group C, PP 1892 XXXVI, pt.ii. Q 17916 (secretary, Glasgow Branch, Operative Masons: the witness is referring to Scotland generally, not just Glasgow, mentioning Edinburgh as one of the "most united" places: Q 17919).

79 To Lodge Members and Non-members, Edin., n.d., c1885, Webb B.34.xvii.

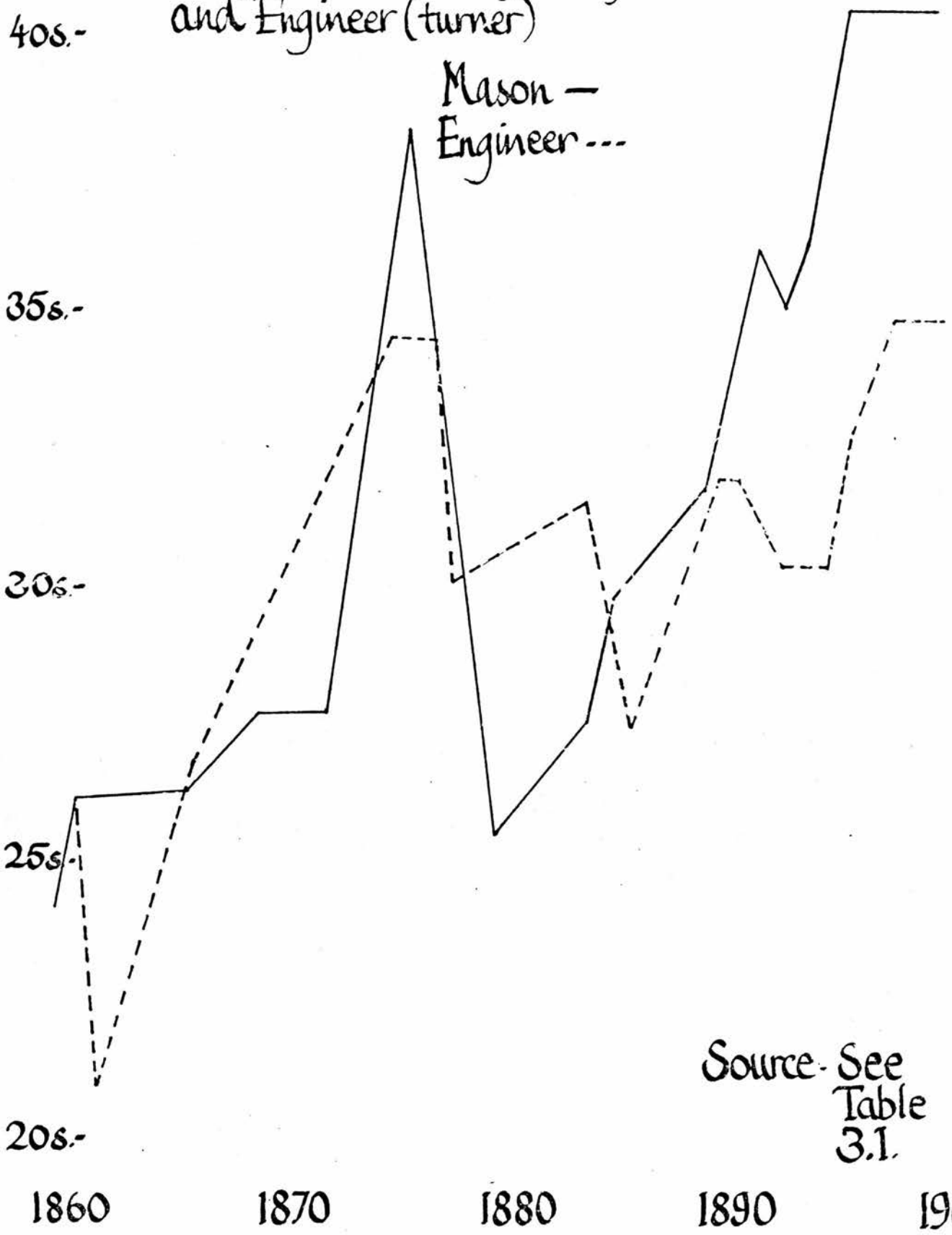
80 These, and all other figures for wage-rates not otherwise attributed are based on the sources for table 3.1.

earnings for a full working week in summer is shown in diagram 3.1. The masons thus enjoyed a position of unusual strength in the 1860's (when they led the way in gaining the nine hour day[81]), early 1870's and 1890's, but were more precariously placed in the later 1870's and 80's. Masons were, of course, affected by the seasons: this has already been discussed, and here I will merely refer to the earlier discussion. The trade also suffered from a high rate of death and disability, partly because of the accidents occasioned by working on high buildings and handling heavy blocks of stone, partly because of industrial diseases contracted from stone dust and from working outdoors in rough weather.[82] Men therefore left the trade young; in what proportion such men found alternative sources of income or fell into destitution must remain a matter of speculation.

81 MacDougall, op.cit., p.xxxvii.

82 Edin. News, 2 Oct., 1852.

Diagram 3.1 - Weekly rate of Mason (summer) and Engineer (turner)



Source - See Table 3.1.

Joiners:

Many of the same considerations apply to the joiners as to the masons. But their position differed in certain important respects. Their employment was less seasonal, partly because joiner work could be done when outside work was not possible, and partly because some joiners were employed in woodworking shops, shipyards, etc.; the more skilled and versatile might even enter such trades as cabinetmaking and patternmaking, whereas the masons were tied more closely to the building industry. Joiners were thus "naturally less subject to fluctuation than masons"[83]. Their rates were less closely affected by the building cycle, rising less in booms, but conversely falling less in slumps. The joiner's rate reached 9½d. only in 1899, when the mason's had been at that level since 1896; on the other hand, whereas the mason's rate fell by 33 per cent, 1876-80, the joiner's fell by only 23 per cent.

Controls on entry to the trade appear to have been weak. According to the Webbs, controls broke down in the depression of the 1870's:[84] a rise in the proportion of joiners aged under 20 from 13 per cent in 1861 to 15 per cent in 1881 may reflect this process. Even before then, the trade contained a "numerous host of half-bred or indifferent hands", mainly recruited from the country.[85] This suggests the existence of divisions within the trade, and a penumbra of under-employed casual labour. But if this problem affected joiners, it did not do so on anything like the scale of the casual labour problem in the third building trade considered, the painters.

[83] Ibid., 9 Oct., 1852.

[84] MS notes, Webb A.7.ii.

[85] Edin.News, 9 Oct., 1852.

Painters:

The painters exemplify the syndrome of casual labour and extreme seasonality which afflicted the more deprived skilled trades.[86] An old painter, quoted by the Edinburgh News, gives a vivid account of the deterioration of the craft; he looks back to the period before the "building mania" of the 1820's, when the masters were "perfect gentlemen", and "there was no scramble to execute a week's work in a couple of days, as we see now." In contrast to those days: "the journeymen house painters of Edinburgh at the present day are the most ill-requited and ill-used class of men I have ever met with, or would like to meet with again." The Edinburgh News comments: "We should like to know how it comes to pass that men with a cultivated taste exceeding all their compeers .... generally possessed of fine literary tastes.... also possessed of fine musical tastes.... who, in fine, are no bellicose politicians, no furious Chartists, no unprincipled demagogues - we should like to know, we repeat, how it came to pass that these men, who follow after this most artistic trade in this most artistic city, are worse paid and less appointed, and in every respect worse off than a common scavenger, a mason's labourer, or a railway navvie?"[87]

[86] The operation of these factors is only just beginning to be investigated by historians, though their importance is evident from a reading of Mayhew and many other sources: see Stedman Jones, op.cit.; Thompson and Yeo (eds.), op.cit.

[87] Quotations in this paragraph are all from Edinburgh News, 27 Nov., 1852.

To understand "how it came to pass" we must consider three interrelated factors: extreme seasonality, uncontrolled competition by cheap, un-apprenticed labour, and the growth of the casual labour market. According to the Edinburgh News two thirds of the men were idle for four months of the year.[88] A painter writing in the Reformer (1869) gives the same basic picture, quoting a figure of 370 out of 600 painters idle in winter.[89] Little, if any, improvement is visible after the turn of the century; Gordon (1908) describes the trade as "extremely seasonal", with at least half unemployed in the slack season.[90] This seasonality was closely related to the problems of dilution with un-qualified labour, and casualisation. The problem faced by the skilled painters was not simply that of regulating apprenticeships (a problem faced by every skilled trade): the proportion of painters under 20 is not notably higher than other trades. The problem was rather one of adults - the "off-scourings of other trades"[91] - working at cheap rates, with no training whatsoever. A report in the Reformer about labourers doing painter's work led to a long correspondence, mainly tending to the conclusion that labourers "fill the places of legitimate tradesmen to their loss and injury"; one correspondent alleged that the labourers were kept on in winter in preference to tradesmen, only 23 out of 165 labourers, but over half the proper painters being laid off.[92] Here again, there is little change by the end of the period: in 1897 the Trades Council protested about

[88] Ibid., 27 Nov., 1852.

[89] Ref. 6 March, 1869.

[90] Gordon, op.cit., pp.285-9.

[91] Letter in Ref. 6 March, 1869.

[92] Ibid., 31 Oct., 1868, 15 June, 1870, 6 March, 1869.

the use of labourers to do painter's work on municipal contracts.[93] This dilution accentuated the seasonal pattern: the Edinburgh News reported that the number of painters in the city rose from 700 to 1000 in the busy season, and that many painters worked as lamp-lighters, theatre scene shifters, etc. during the winter, concluding that the problem was "uneven demand", rather than over-supply of labour.[94]

The painters were almost certainly the worst placed of the trades under consideration. Although their rates of wages were not far below those for other skilled workers, they suffered from chronic seasonality and casualisation, and in many cases probably did not receive the standard rate, even for the hours they did work. A strong employers' association resisted the demand for a minimum rate in 1858, and subsequently retained a position of unusual power, even by the standards of Victorian labour relations.[95] The painting trade therefore illustrates the importance of dilution and the casual labour market, in accentuating fluctuations in employment, with a disastrous effect on the bargaining power and economic rewards of skilled labour.

Engineers:

The engineers, according to a local reviewer of Our New Masters, "are generally the elite of the working men, and so far removed from the operatives and labourers at the lower end of the scale that they have not many sympathies in common, and not much intercourse with them"[96]. The present concern is with the economic

[93] T.C. Minutes, 6 April, 1897. [94] Edin. News, 27 Nov., 1852

[95] Edin. Master Painters Assoc., printed broadsheet, 1858; G. Baird, The Operative House Painters of Scotland, n.p., 1959, passim. The broadsheet, and other materials relating to the Master Painters were kindly loaned by Miss Ruth Greig.

[96] Ref., 29 March, 1873.

position of this "elite", rather than with attitudes and social contacts ("sympathies" and "intercourse"), which form the central theme of the second part of this study. The development of capital goods industries as a leading sector, in both the domestic and export economies of the second half of the nineteenth century, created a heavy demand for the skills of the engineering trades. Down to the 1890's technical change took the form of a series of improvements and refinements to the basic machine tool innovations of the earlier nineteenth century, and their application to a wide range of tasks; production methods continued to rely on the knowledge and expertise of the skilled worker, rather than on the subdivision of mechanised tasks characteristic of the mass production metal working industries of the twentieth century. The effect of change was, then, to create new, more specialised and demanding skills, rather than to displace skilled labour. By the 1850's turners had emerged as a "distinct branch of the trade"; while the end of the period saw the development of electrical engineering in Edinburgh, and of the further specialisation of engineering skills associated with it.[97] The decomposition of the skills of the old millwright into those of fitters, turners, patternmakers, and so on, was thus followed by further specialisation within these trades, as new tools and specialised techniques developed in the different branches of engineering.

The engineer could thus offer the scarce skills needed by an expanding sector of industry. There were, however, elements of instability in his economic position. Engineering was affected by the trade cycle: as table 3.2 indicates, unemployment in 1893 was

[97] Edin. News, 13 Aug., 1853; Institute of Public Administration, op.cit., pp.23-34. Cf. below, ch.4, sect.ii and sources there cited.

heaviest in the engineering and metal trades. Engineering rates, like those of building workers, fluctuated with the level of activity in the industry. These movements are traced in diagram 3.1, from which it is apparent that the fluctuations are less extreme in both directions, than those in the mason's rate: the net effect is perhaps to place masons and engineers in the same broad "income bracket". The second element of instability was, as with every trade, that of uncontrolled entry. The Webbs reported no effective regulations in engineering.[98] The proportion under 20 appears to follow a cyclical pattern, falling in 1881 after the depression, and rising following the boom of the 1890's.[99] The A.S.E. repeatedly complained of the large number of apprentices in Edinburgh and Leith, leading, as they claimed, to a greater labour surplus at times of depression.[100]

Technical change placed further pressure on the job monopolies of the skilled engineer. In a head office questionnaire of 1876 the A.S.E. Edinburgh District reported that labourers "sometimes" "do the work of Mechanics" on planing and drilling machines; and following the lock-out of 1897-8 men complained that they found labourers at their machines on returning to work.[101] New classes of work, the Webbs noted, were "learned largely by labourers and improvers"[102]. Large numbers of apprentices or boys could also be employed as semi skilled machinists, presenting the

[98] MS notes, Webb A.7.ii.

[99] It is hard to disentangle the effect of trade union policies from that of other factors, such as the attractiveness of an occupation to prospective entrants: at times of depression, trade unions are more likely to wish to restrict entry, but less able to do so; on the other hand, this may be offset by a decline in the attractiveness of the trade.

[100] For example, A.S.E. Q.R., May 1894; questionnaire to Districts, 1876: photocopy supplied by Mr. G. Crossick.

[101] Ibid.; A.S.E., Monthly Jour., Feb., 1898.

[102] MS notes, Webb A.7.ii.

familiar spectacle of half-trained men (or "handymen") encroaching on parts of the work done by time-served craftsmen.[103] It is, however, important not to exaggerate the impact of these trends.[104] There was no massive downgrading of skilled labour - lathes, for example, remained the preserve of time-served men[105] - and the engineers retained a strong bargaining position based on the indispensability of their skills for kinds of work not as yet performable by semi skilled workers.

Ironmoulders:

Like the skills of engineers those of ironmoulders were placed in demand with the expansion of the metal working industries. They were certainly well paid, their rates being sometimes slightly above, sometimes slightly below the engineers'. In some respects, however, their situation was less favourable. In the first place, there is some evidence of divisions within the trade. Apart from the foundry work undertaken in engineering firms, moulders were employed to produce large numbers of identical railings, gates, pipes, etc.[106] This work was apparently less skilled, and the element of product standarisation made possible encroachments on the job monopolies of skilled moulders.[107] Apprentices or boys might become proficient only in certain branches of work, and this half-trained lab ur could then undercut the more versatile skilled men. The Webbs reported that

103 Gordon, op.cit., pp.212-5.

104 The Webbs were rather inclined to do this, in support of their general argument that sectional kinds of trade unionism were short-sighted and ineffectual, as well as undesirable from other points of view. Cf. S. and B. Webb, Industrial Democracy, London, 1926, esp. pp.470-2, 713-4. (The notes from which I have quoted extensively provided material for this book).

105 Gordon, op.cit., p.214.

106 R.C. Lab., group A, PP 1893-4 XXXII, Q 23452 (secretary, A.I.M.S.).

107 Edin. News, 20 Aug., 1853.

apprenticeship controls collapsed in 1868, and this is confirmed by the Associated Ironmoulders' Secretary who estimated in evidence to the Royal Commission that there were 11,000 ironmoulders in Scotland and 4,000 boys employed in foundries.[108] In Edinburgh we find at least one case of a strike over the "introduction of a Labourer to work as a Moulder"[109]. By 1908, mechanisation was leading to a more extensive use of unskilled men, and the trade was said to be no longer attracting apprentices.[110]

Shoemakers:

The shoemakers, in the words of the Edinburgh News, were "systematically ground down to a greater extent than any class without exception we have hitherto considered"[111]. Nineteen years later the Operative Cordwainers (who certainly represented the more prosperous part of the trade) complained that they were "the least paid of any skilled labour", estimating piece earnings as on average equivalent to a time-rate of 4d. per hour.[112] The conditions affecting the shoemakers are in many respects different from those of the painters, but they are the same in one important respect: the casual labour problem.

The Edinburgh shoemakers were divided into sections of the trade similar to those Mayhew found in London.[113] In 1853, the "first class" shops - those employing skilled labour in the pro-

108 MS notes, Webb A.7,ii; R.C.Lab., group A. op.cit., Q 23459.

109 T.C. Minutes, 5 March, 1895. The dispute was complicated by rivalries between the two unions at that time recruiting ironmoulders, the recently established and smaller Central Ironmoulders Assoc. claiming that the offending labourer had been taught by an A.I.M.S. member.

110 Gordon, op.cit., p.241.

111 Edin. News, 19 March, 1853.

112 Operative Cordwainers Memorial, 1872, op.cit.

113 Thompson and Yeo (eds.), op.cit., pp.232-5.

duction of high quality goods to order - were said to employ only 50 shoemakers (3 per cent of the total), "second class" shops employed another 500 (32 per cent), while the remaining 1,000 "journeymen, boys, everything" were in "third class" shops subject to no established rates of wages; informants estimated that a "second class" man could earn 12s. a week when fully employed.[114] In 1868, the "first class" rate was equivalent to 4d. per hour, the "second class" to 3¾d. and the "third class" to 3d.[115] In interpreting these figures it must always be remembered that the "third class" shaded into a vast penumbra of sweated and casual workers, for whom - as Mayhew's investigations in London revealed - hours might be extended and wages lowered almost without limit.

Down to the 1860's all shoemakers worked at home, and the Edinburgh News attributed their condition largely to this fact:

> "This hereditary and deeply-rooted dislike to be called a servant is then at the foundation of the shoemakers' misery. The sooner they rid themselves of this ideology the better for themselves and the better for society."[116]

It is certainly arguable that the system of working, with the division of the process between "closers" and "makers", occasioned much waiting about and accentuated the irregularity of employment. Although shoemaking had no distinct seasonal pattern there were nonetheless great variations in employment and earnings.[117] As with the painters these fluctuations were

[114] Edin. News, 19 March, 1853.
[115] Scottish Amalg. Union of Boot and Shoemakers, Report, Feb.-Aug.,1868
[116] Edin. News, 2 April, 1853. [117] Edin. News, 19 March, 1853.

bound up with uncontrolled recruitment and the growth of casual labour. Uncontrolled recruitment did not take the form of excessive numbers of apprentices, the proportion under 20 being generally less than for any other skilled trade. The influx was of adults, either from the country, or from town-dwellers who turned to shoemaking in the absence of other employment. An article in the Typographical Circular mentions mending shoes, together with such last resort employments as lamplighting, leaflet distribution, etc., in a list of jobs open to the unemployed printer; James Connolloy, who certainly had no pretensions to be a skilled shoemaker, set up as a cobbler in 1894.[118]

There were important changes in the trade during the period. The advent of the sewing machine in the 1860's led to the introduction of workshops. The North Briton comments on the improved condition of the shoemaking trade, whereas "ten years ago the trade was proverbial for what appeared to be hopeless poverty."[119] On the other hand, it is likely that home work persisted in the less favoured part of the trade; the effect of the workshops may indeed have been to accentuate the difference between those working for regular employers and casual home workers. Even for the former, the workshop system had, they complained, reduced their piece earnings by shortening hours.[120] With further mechanisation the sweated "slop" trade gradually gave way to a mass produced factory industry, employing semi skilled workers. The craft shoemaker, working for that bespoke market which was such a notable feature of the Edinburgh consumer trades, was then less immediately

118 S.T.C., July, 1869; C. Desmond Greaves, The Life and Times of James Connolly, London, 1961, pp.52-3.

119 N.B., 19 Aug., 1863.

120 Operative Cordwainers Memorial, 1872.

threatened by the competition of cheap un-qualified labour using a degenerated version of his skills, although he faced problems of demarcation, with the piecemeal introduction of new machinery. The increasing technical and occupational distinctiveness of the craft sector thus strengthened the position of the skilled shoemaker: "Young men who have been well taught in the country and come to the towns easily get work from some of the first class firms who make a speciality of hand-made goods; there is no surplus of labour in this line."[121]

The foregoing account of occupational experiences has been intended to indicate the processes affecting the different skilled trades, and their respective degrees of homogeneity or heterogeneity. The statistical data presented in the final section of this chapter will enable us to make some test of the accuracy of this account of economic differentiation. It seems appropriate at this point to present that account in summary and schematic form. Table 3.5 classifies the trades under discussion into three economic categories: "advantaged", "intermediate" and "deprived". There is some evidence that these categories were meaningful to people of the period. One study (c1900) refers to "men in good trades - lath-splitters, masons, etc." and apprenticeships in the engineering and joiner's trades were said to be in demand;[122] while the depressed condition of the shoemakers and painters was, as we have seen, a bye-word. This suggests that certain trades were generally considered to be unusually well or badly situated, relative to skilled labour generally. Table 3.5 also summarises the variables which have been defined in the course of the analysis: from this,

[121] Gordon, op.cit., p.155.

[122] D.N. Paton et al, A Study of the Diet of the Labouring Classes in Edinburgh, Edin., n.d., c 1900; R.C.Lab., group A, PP 1893-4 XXXII, Q 23289; Gordon, op.cit., p.176.

it would seem that the growth of uncontrolled casual labour markets is the most important distinguishing feature of the deprived trades, while those trades faced with the more often discussed problems of cyclical fluctuation and technological change are better placed.

Table 3.5.
Summary of Economic Situations of Selected Skilled Trades

	Fluctuations			
	Cyclical	Seasonal	Casual Labour	Technical Change
Advantaged Trades:				
Machinemen		X		X
Bookbinders		X		X
Masons	X	X		(From 1900's)
Joiners	X	X		
Engineers	X			X
Intermediate Trades:				
Compositors		X	X	(From 1890's)
Ironmoulders	X			(From 1900's)
Deprived Trades:				
Painters	X	X	X	
Shoemakers			X	

Finally, it is necessary to fit the analysis of occupational experiences into some broader picture of the distribution of economic rewards. To do so, we must consider more closely the relationship between inter-occupational and intra-occupational differences. Trades towards the lower end of the scale are noticeably more heterogeneous than the more prosperous occupations. We may therefore think of the various trades as pyramids of varying shapes and sizes, all contained within the bigger pyramid representing the economic hierarchy of skilled

labour. At the top of this bigger pyramid are foremen and other workers whose irreplaceable skills and responsibility earned them exceptionally high wages and regular employment:at the bottom are large numbers of sweated and casual workers in what I have called the "deprived" trades, together with varying proportions in other trades who can expect to be fully employed only at the very busiest periods. As one moves down the pyramid of skilled labour, the smaller pyramids for the individual trades become higher, steeper and narrower towards the top, whereas the pyramids for the more favoured trades are less steep and broader towards the top. To complete the metaphor, the tips of the pyramids for the deprived trades overlap the bases of the pyramids for the advantaged trades. In other words, we find a greater range of variation within the trade as we move down the rank order of skilled occupations, minorities within the deprived trades sharing the economic standard enjoyed by the more prosperous - and internally more homogeneous - trades. Thus the stratum of relatively privileged workers is likely to include some men from every trade, but far higher proportions from the advantaged trades.

iii. Statistical Evidence

(a) Earnings:[123]

The analysis so far has been unavoidably impressionistic; figures quoted have been for standard wage-rates, or at best for an approximate range of variation. It is, however, possible to make

[123] The study of earnings reported below would have been quite impossible without the statistical advice of Mr. A. Fielding and the computing work of Mr. R. Bland, whose help is gratefully acknowledged.

more precise statements about the employment incomes (as opposed to the wage-rates) of individual workers, by the use of company records - a rich, and oddly neglected source for the researcher in this field.[124] Records were found for three printing firms in the city, and for three firms in various other industries.[125] It was decided to use these sources for a comparative "panel sample" analysis of earnings; an initial survey of the material suggested that such panel samples could be traced for one year periods, before the problem of "panel mortality" began to reach unmanageable proportions. For one firm (the Scotsman) three years in the 1850's and 60's were chosen, while the other samples all fall in some or all of three years in the 1880's and 90's - this choice of years being determined largely by the availability of simultaneous data for more than one firm. In all six firms samples were drawn from departments with a labour-force composed (apart from a few apprentices) of skilled men. In addition to this, samples were drawn from the machine rooms of the three printing firms (which employed semi skilled as well as skilled labour); and in two of the printing firms further samples were drawn from a third occupational group, semi skilled women, engaged in various production processes. Random samples (generally of ten individuals) were selected from the wage record for the first pay date of the year in question.[126] The weekly earnings

[124] Recent studies which do make use of employment records are: Neale, op.cit.; A. Slaven, "Earnings and Productivity in the Scottish Coal-Mining Industry during the Nineteenth Century", in P.L. Payne (ed.), Studies in Scottish Business History, London, 1967.

[125] The archives of the Scotsman were surveyed by Professor P.L.Payne; those of the other firms by the National Register of Archives (Scotland).

[126] Some of the Scotsman and MacKenzie and Moncur samples are rather larger than 10: these firms were sampled at an early, partly experimental stage of data collection.

of the selected individuals were recorded throughout the year, and aggregated into monthly totals (or rather, totals for thirteen four week periods); the data were then punched, each card including the 13 monthly income figures for one individual worker. It is on this data set of 13 x N observations of earnings that the statistical analysis reported below was carried out. (In future, I refer to the individual randomly selected workers as cases, to their monthly earnings as observations, and to cases excluded from the analysis for lack of sufficient observations as panel mortality).[127] Details of the samples are summarised in table 3.6.

The study includes two samples of compositors (from the Scotsman newspaper in the 1850's and 60's and Constable, the publisher, in the 80's and 90's) and three samples from printing machine rooms. Another sample from the third printing firm, Bartholmew the map-makers, covers a variety of highly skilled lithographic preparatory processes (litho artists, engravers, etc.), referred to as "litho trades".[128]

127 The treatment of weeks when one or more cases does not appear in the wage record was a major problem. It was eventually decided to treat the first week when a name could not be found as a weekly income of zero for that individual; subsequent weeks were treated as missing data. In aggregating weekly earnings into months, months with one or more week missing were recorded as missing observations for that case. Each observation of monthly earnings is therefore based on four complete figures for weekly earnings, of which one, but not more than one may be zero. Cases who disappear temporarily are treated in the same way on their re-appearance in the wage book. The only exceptions to these rules are a few cases whose names do appear in the book, but with no wage shown against them, or with annotations such as "ill", "holiday", etc; it seemed legitimate to treat all such instances as weekly earnings of zero. All cases with five or more (out of 13) monthly observations missing were dropped from the sample altogether. This procedure almost certainly under-estimates fluctuations in income, but it seemed better to avoid overloading the analysis with imponderables.

128 P. Bartholmew, "House of Bartholmew", unpublished typescript: I am indebted to Mr. Bartholmew for the loan of this work, and for answering my questions about the technique of map-making and the grades of worker employed in the various processes.

Table 3.6.
Details of Samples of Workers' Earnings

Firm/Group	Panel mortality % of cases dropped (insufficient observations)	Included in analysis: N: Cases	N: observations	Years + covered by samples
Scotsman				
Compositors	7	42	555	1858,65,68
Machine room	10	18	208	1865,68
Constable				
Compositors	3	29	363	1887,90,99
Machine room	10	27	345	1887,90,99
Binders *	10	27	338	1887,90,99
Bartholmew				
Litho trades	7	28	324	1887,90,99
Machine room	10	18	225	1890,99
Colourists etc. *	14	24	309	1887,90,99
MacKenzie and Moncur				
Building trades	20	20	243	1887,90
Allan				
Shoemakers	15	17	210	1887,99
Hamilton and Inches				
Silversmiths etc.	0	10	130	1899

* Semi skilled women.

\+ No wage records were available for the Scotsman after 1868, for the Scotsman machine room in 1858, for MacKenzie and Moncur in 1899, and for Hamilton and Inches before 1899. The samples for Bartholmew's machine room, 1887, and for Allan, 1890 were abandoned because of excessively high "panel mortality" (50% and 60% of cases dropped respectively).

See footnote 127 for details of treatment of missing observations and panel mortality.

The last group of printing workers sampled are semi skilled women, engaged in book-binding (Constable) and in applying coloured ink in the map-printing process and mounting the printed maps (Bartholmew).[129] Although these groups of less skilled printing workers have been included for comparative purposes, the main

[129] The semi skilled labour in the Bartholmew machine room was also female; but it is treated with the machine room sample, rather than with the semi skilled women in other departments.

interest will be in the skilled labour employed in the composing room, litho trades and machine room. The fourth firm, MacKenzie and Moncur, employed various building trades in the manufacture and erection of greenhouses, conservatories, etc.[130] It is not possible to identify specific trades from the surviving records, so that my sample has to be regarded simply as one of various building trades.[131] The shoemaking firm included, Allan, belonged to the high quality bespoke sector of the trade, while the last firm, Hamilton and Inches, made silverware. (All the firms sampled outside the printing industry were, in fact, distinguished by their orientation to a "luxury" market). Among the skilled trades the most important omission from the available business records are undoubtedly the engineering and metal trades. Semi and unskilled labour, on the other hand, is represented entirely by women (apart from a few apprentices and the boys employed in the Scotsman and Constable machine rooms); there are no records for adult male semi and unskilled labour.

Before discussing the data themselves, we must assess how the experience of workers in the firms sampled is likely to have compared with that of other firms. The Scotsman was unique among local employers, as a leading national newspaper, but on the other hand sufficiently important in its own right to justify inclusion;

130 Information from Mr. I. MacKenzie, former Director. The firm also had a foundry, which made manhole covers, pipes, etc., as well as the metal work for the frames of prefabricated buildings; but the surviving wage books almost certainly refer only to the building trades employed.

131 It is, however, safe to assme that not many labourers are included: the wage books include some men taken on for very short periods, who can readily be distinguished by the fact that they are not given pay numbers ; these are almost certainly labourers hired on the spot for particular jobs. In view of the very high turnover of this group it was excluded from the sampling frame. The sample will at any rate be treated as one of predominantly skilled building workers.

Bartholmew were engaged in a highly skilled and specialised branch of the industry; Constable, however, may well be representative of a number of local firms of comparable size - though it is dangerous to assume this to be so. The remaining firms, as suggested above, all belonged to that sector of local industry engaged in the production of high quality goods to order. It is probable that employment at MacKenzie and Moncur was exceptionally stable for the building trades; while the complete absence of any fluctuation in earnings for the silversmiths clearly reflects the privileged position of highly skilled labour in the "luxury trades". The general bias - and, indeed, the bias implied in the very survival of appropriate company archives - is almost certainly to the more prosperous, expanding and economically secure sectors of industry. For this reason, all statistical inferences in the following discussion must be clearly understood to refer only to the problem of generalisation from my samples to the limited populations from which they are drawn, not to the larger population of workers in the occupation outside the particular firms; any inference to this more general level involves problems of a substantive, not statistical character. Even within the population, as I have just defined it, the "panel sample" method implies a bias to the more regularly employed. On the other hand, the figures in table 3.6. for "panel mortality" suggest that the majority of workers in the firms were employed with sufficient regularity to give the minimum of eight out of 13 monthly observations which was the criterion of retention in the sample.[132] If the population studied had included large numbers employed for very short periods only, an entirely different statistical design would have been needed.

[132] See footnote 127.

The data are discussed under three main headings. First, I consider differences in the mean earnings of the various groups and firms. This is followed by a discussion of monthly movements in earnings, based on correlation and regression analysis. Finally, it seems important - especially in the light of the earlier discussion of intra-occupational differences - to obtain some measure of the heterogeneity of the samples, and to delineate whatever systematic patterning may be discernible in individual differences in income.

Table 3.7 shows the mean earnings of my samples, given for convenience in the form of earnings per week. There was, of course, a certain amount of variation between years, the greatest (10.56 s. difference between the highest and lowest yearly figure) being for the Scotsman compositors, the smallest (only 0.53 s. difference) for the shoemakers. This factor may bias the results shown in the table; however, the figures for individual years make little difference to the rank order of the groups, so that combining years seems a valid procedure for descriptive purposes. (For the more analytical statistical procedures discussed below, an attempt was made to adjust for yearly variations). The most notable trends over the years are an improvement in the earnings of the Scotsman compositors - rising from 19.74 s. in 1858 to 30.30 s. in 1865 and 29.36 s. in 1868 - and of the Constable and Bartholmew machine rooms. The Constable compositors, on the other hand, show a steady decline, from 26.40 s. in 1887 to 21.67 s. in 1899. If this is at all typical of the experience of the trade, it certainly gives statistical support to the impression of relative economic decline - especially as compared to the machine room workers.

Further interpretation of the figures is complicated by the inclusion of apprentices (and, in the machine room, of semi skilled boys and women), as well as journeymen. There was no way of avoiding this, since one could not tell, a priori, which individuals were apprentices; although some of the wage books made this clear not all did, and it seemed most rigorous to treat all firms alike. It is nonetheless desirable to find some way of adjusting the figures, so as to give more satisfactory estimates of journeymen's earnings. The procedure adopted was to obtain personal means for every individual case, and then to re-calculate sample means, excluding those cases whose mean earnings fell below a specified level. The second part of table 3.7 gives maximum and minimum estimates obtained in this way. There is, of course, a considerable danger in this procedure of assuming what is, in fact, under investigation. Alternative estimates are given, in an attempt to steer a middle course between the two dangers that face us in estimating the real figure for journeymen's mean earnings; that of under-estimating by the inclusion of cases who are not really journeymen; and that of over-estimating by the exclusion of cases who are really journeymen. There is no real solution to the difficulty, and all that can be claimed for the figures is that they are probably closer approximations to the mean earnings of journeymen, than either the unadjusted figures for my samples, or the figures for standard wage-rates most often quoted by researchers.

Table 3.7.
Mean Weekly Earnings of Samples (shillings)

All Cases:

	Scotsman	Constable		Bartholmew
Compositors:	26.41	24.34	Litho Trades:	30.87
Machine room:	16.88	23.30		19.99

Building trades:	34.77	Shoe-makers:	23.74	Silver-smiths:	32.00

	Constable	Bartholmew
Semi skilled women:	12.67	11.07

"Journeymen" only (estimated figures)*

	Scotsman		Constable			Bartholmew	
Adjustment:	Min.	Max.	Min.	Max.		Min.	Max.
Compositors	28.38	31.74	25.60	28.48	Litho Trades:	36.52	37.21
@(N:observations)	(507)	(416)	(339)	(261)		(266)	(258)
Machine room	17.30	22.77	28.16	32.48		32.49+	
(N)	(198)	(39)	(261)	(190)		(111)	

+ Building Trades:	34.77
(N)	(243)
+ Shoemakers:	26.26
(N)	(184)
+ Silversmiths:	32.00
(N)	(130)

* Minimum estimate: Mean re-calculated excluding all individual cases with personal mean earnings of less than 10 s. weekly.

Maximum estimate: excluding all cases with personal mean earnings of less than 20 s. weekly.

@ See table 3.6 for N for unadjusted figures.

\+ No adjustment applicable, or only one adjustment applicable.

All figures are for all years sampled combined (see table 3.6 for details of years).

This is the sole purpose of the second part of table 3.7; in particular, it should be stressed that the statistical analysis presented below is based on the unadjusted figures, except when the contrary is specified. The main difference made by the adjustment is, predictably, to reveal the relatively high earnings of the Constable and Bartholmew machinemen, previously concealed by their inclusion is samples of heterogeneous skill composition. The Scotsman machine room, on the other hand, contained only three men with mean earnings of more than 20 s. weekly. This may reflect differences between the newspaper and other sectors of the industry, or a strengthening of the position of skilled machinemen between the 1860's and 80's, or both. (It is worth noting here that union controls in news machine room were said to be weak).[133] Apart from the Scotsman machinemen, these estimates are largely in accordance with predictions from the earlier account of occupational experiences, the Constable compositors and the shoemakers having lower earnings (on either estimate) than the other trades.

Before proceeding to further analysis of the differences between occupations and firms it was desirable to standardise the data for the effect of yearly movements in earnings; each observation was therefore adjusted by the difference between the mean for the particular group in all years (that is to say, the means shown in the first part of table 3.7) and the group mean for the year in which the observation fell.[134] (The silversmiths are ex-

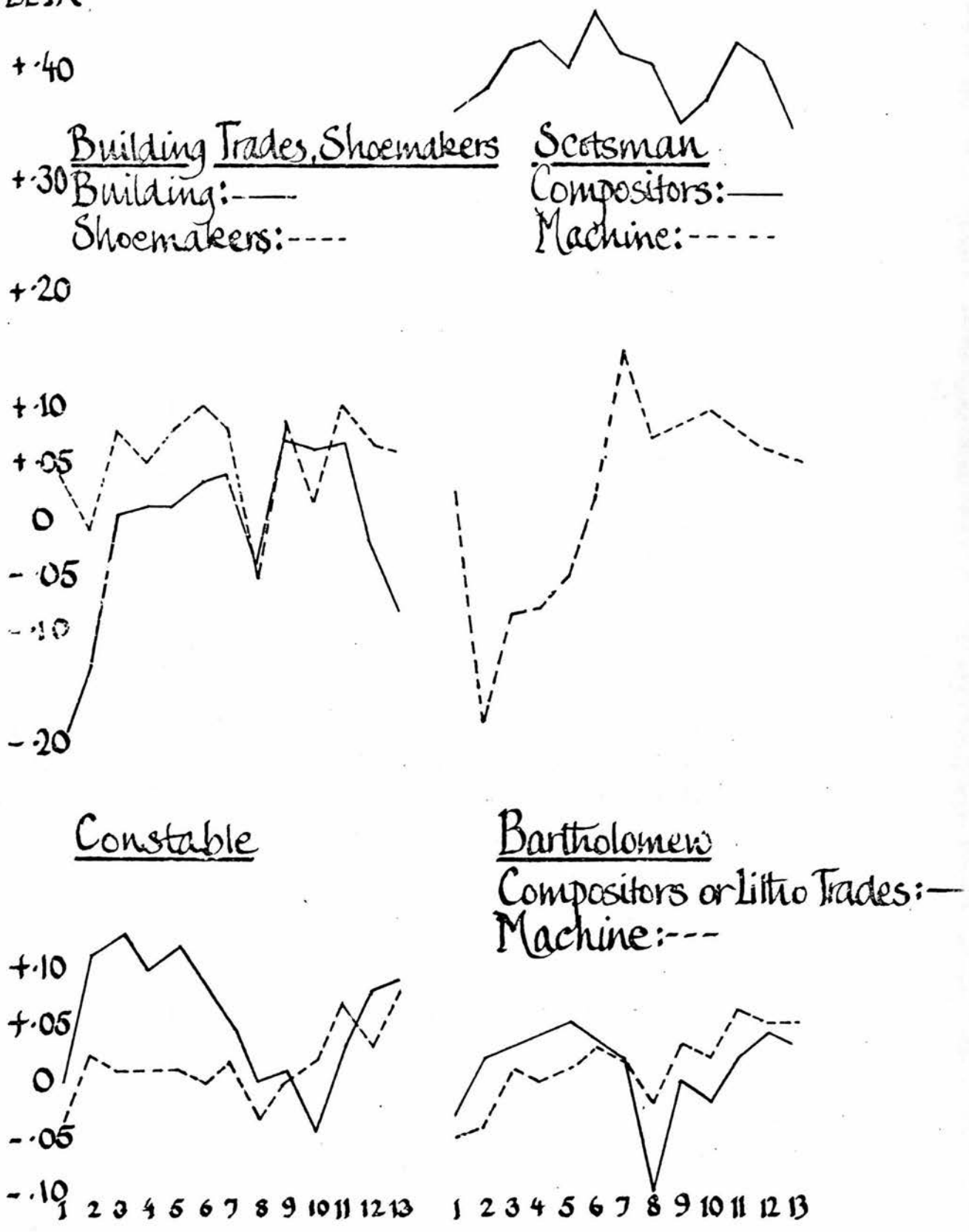
133 Letters in S.T.C., March, 1887. News compositors, on the other hand, were always regarded as belonging to the best paid sections of skilled labour.

134 In no sample did this alter mean monthly earnings for all years by more than 1s.

cluded from the analysis, in view of the exceptional absence of any monthly change in earnings, and the fact that data are available only for 1899). Two analysis of variance tests were carried out on this standardised data: by firm, and by skill grade.[135] Both sets of differences were statistically significant ($p < .001$). In view of the possible spurious effect of the differing skill composition of the five firms - there being no departments outside the printing firms comparable to the heterogeneous machine room samples or the semi skilled women - a further test was carried out, for differences between firms, excluding the machine room and semi skilled women; unfortunately the appropriate data file had inadvertently been erased at this stage, so that the un-modified data, rather than the standardised observations, had to be used for this third test. With this proviso, the difference between firms, controlling for skill grade, still proved to be significant ($p < .001$).

[135] Three types were defined: the heterogeneous machine room samples, the semi skilled women and the remaining samples, composed entirely of skilled men (apart from a few apprentices).

Diagram 3.2. Monthly Movements in Earnings: Beta Coefficients for months (dummy variables)



These findings are not unexpected; it would, indeed, have been surprising, had the analysis not shown significant differences between occupations and firms. The monthly fluctuation in earnings is a further source of variation, and one of considerable interest in relation to the impressionistic evidence considered earlier in this chapter. Some picture of the seasonal effects can be obtained by treating the 13 months as "dummy variables" (each having only two possible values, 0 or 1) and correlating them with the observations of earnings. (Standardised yearly data, as detailed above, were used for this analysis). Multiple correlation coefficients for all 13 dummy variables will then indicate the overall effect of monthly variation, while the regression equations will show the pattern of the movement in earnings from month to month.

The purpose here is, it should be emphasised, exploratory; monthly changes are only a part of the variation in earnings, and their relative importance in the different samples is of more interest than the magnitude of any single correlation taken in isolation.

Table 3.8.
Multiple Correlation Coefficients for Monthly Variation in Earnings

Compositors -	Scotsman	0.10
	Constable	0.19
Machine room -	Scotsman	0.33
	Constable	0.12
	Bartholmew	0.12
Litho trades		0.16
Building trades		0.33
Shoemakers		0.16
Silversmiths		0.00
Semi skilled women -	Constable	0.12
	Bartholmew	0.15

There is, however, reason to suspect that the correlation coefficients (shown in table 3.8) may under-estimate the monthly fluctuation: missing observations. When an individual does not appear in the wage book there is no way of knowing whether he has really disappeared from the population studied (because of death, migration, retirement, etc.) or whether he should still be treated as a member of the panel sample, with an income of zero for the weeks during which he is missing from the record (because of illness, unemployment, etc.). The rules adopted for such instances probably err on the side of under-estimating fluctuation.[136] That this does in fact occur is suggested by the finding that, whereas under half of all months had one or more missing observations, at least two-thirds of months when earnings moved downwards had missing observations, except in three of the less seasonal groups.[137] From table 3.8 it appears that the strongest monthly effects are in the Constable compositors, Scotsman machine room and building trades. The first and last mentioned results were expected, but that for the Scotsman machine room was not (it may reflect seasonal variations in the number of copies printed, but there is no evidence to confirm this suggestion). On the other hand, the smaller correlation for the other machine room samples suggests that they were less affected by seasonal movements than the compositors or litho trades, thus confirming the earlier account of occupational experience of the different printing trades.

[136] See footnote 127.

[137] The exceptions are Scotsman compositors, Constable machine room and shoemakers. Although the shoemakers have the third largest correlation the form of this fluctuation is of changes from month to month, rather than any consistent seasonal trend (see diagram 3.2).

Regression analysis can be used to trace the change in earnings for each month, and thus to reconstruct the form, as well as the overall effect of monthly variations. Diagram 3.2 shows the beta coefficients for the 13 months. (It may be noted that, since the 13 dummy variables in the equation have only two possible values, 0 or 1, the betas in fact show monthly fluctuations about the overall average). The pattern for Constable and Bartholmew bears out statementsin documentary sources about the seasonal cycle in printing, with busy periods in the spring and towards the end of the year, and a slack period in summer;[138] although the pattern is shared by both departments, it is rather sharper for the compositors and litho trades than in the machine rooms. The winter cut-back indicated by the curve for the building trades is likewise to be expected.[139] Although the overall correlation for the shoemakers in table 3.8 is quite large, the graph reveals that this reflects changes from month to month, rather than any consistent seasonal trend, and thus confirms the impression of considerable short-run variation in earnings, without the clear-cut seasonal pattern of the printing or building trades. The pattern for the Scotsman is, once again, puzzling, with a considerable divergence between the two departments in the form, as well as in the overall effect, of monthly variations. But, with this exception, the data regarding seasonality do confirm, with the "harder" evidence of samples of actual earnings, the impression given by other sources.

[138] J. Child, "History of Industrial Relations in the British Printing Industry", Oxford, D.Phil., 1953, p.299; Stedman Jones, op.cit., pp.34,381, figure 3.

[139] The troughs in month 8 in all firms except the Scotsman appear, from annotations in some wage books, to be holiday periods.

The foregoing discussion suggests that there were marked differences between skilled occupations in the level and variability of earnings and the patterning of seasonal fluctuation. The data also throw light on a further dimension of variation: that of intra-occupational divisions. Some measure of these divisions is afforded by the figures for the personal mean earnings of individual cases (used in table 3.7 to adjust sample means for the effect of the presence of some non-journeymen). In table 3.9, then, individual cases (excluding those with mean earnings less than 20 s. per week) are classified by their personal mean earnings for the whole year. Whereas the litho trades, Constable and Bartholmew machinemen and building trades have 70 per cent with mean earnings of 30 s. and over, the Scotsman compositors have 61 per cent, the silversmiths 60 per cent, and the Constable compositors and shoemakers less than half in this category. This distribution is to some extent predictable from the figures for mean earnings (table 3.7). But there also seem to be differences in the internal heterogeneity of the samples, with a wider scatter of individual mean earnings in the less well paid trades. Whereas most of the samples have majorities of cases in the same earnings bracket as the maximum estimate of journeymen's mean earnings (see table 3.7),[140] the Constable compositors and shoemakers have majorities in the categories above and below that containing the estimated mean.

[140] The figures in table 3.7 are, of course, based on the sum of observations, not the sum of individual mean earnings for all cases.

Table 3.9.
Individual Variations in Earnings

% of cases with mean earnings: (N:Cases)		20-24s.	25-29s.	30s. and over
Compositors -				
Scotsman	(31)	23	16	61
Constable	(20)	30	25	45
Machine room -				
Scotsman	(3)	67	33	0
Constable	(15)	7	20	73
Bartholmew	(9)	0	11	89
Litho trades	(21)	14	10	76
Building trades	(20)	10	15	75
Shoemakers	(15)	60	13	27
Silversmiths	(10)	20	20	60

Cases * with mean earnings:	under 30s.	30s. and over	under 30s.	30s. and over
% of cases with:	lowest monthly observation = ¾ or more of highest		Coefficient of variation = 0.09 or less	
Compositors -				
Scotsman	9	37	17	42
Constable	0	44	0	44
Shoemakers	36	75	27	75

* Based on cases with mean earnings of 20s. and over only.

The second part of table 3.9 indicates that this scatter has some relationship to the incidence of fluctuation on the individual worker. The range of earnings over the year (lowest monthly observation as a proportion of highest) appears to be greater for cases with lower mean earnings. This is confirmed by a further measure (the coefficient of variation) based on the standard deviation of the individual's earnings, rather than merely on the two extreme observations. This analysis, then, confirms the conclusion that the compositors and shoemakers (especially the

latter) had marked internal divisions, with a large low paid "tail"; and it was precisely the low paid group who suffered the most severe fluctuations in income. The small number of cases, and various practical constraints on the data analysis make it impossible to test this in any rigorous fashion.[141] But the findings do support widely held views (discussed earlier in this chapter) about the earnings structure of the occupations mentioned, on the basis of data from employment records, a rather "harder" source than the impressionistic remarks about "average" wages, on which we are otherwise forced to rely.

(b) Survey data: the physique of children:

The earnings data have the important advantage that they reflect the observed employment incomes of individuals over periods of 52 weeks. But they still reflect only a part of the economic experience of the worker and his family. The "panel sampling" method is viable for no more than one year for each set of cases; and even within this period the treatment of missing observations is, as we have seen, a serious problem. Nor do the records analysed reveal anything about family circumstances and those supplementary sources of income so critically important to nineteenth century wage-earning families.[142] The data to which I now

141 The association between range of earnings and earnings category (as tabulated in the second part of table 3.9) is statistically significant for the three samples combined ($X^2 = 6.43$, $p < .01$). Since the coefficient of variation is a function of the mean it is not possible to test this association in the same way. It would have been interesting, had resources permitted, to re-run the regressions on sub-samples composed of cases from the different earnings brackets.

142 The classic statement on this is that of Rowntree: B.S. Rowntree, Poverty: a study of town life, London, 1901, pp.136-8.

turn complement those so far discussed, in that they reflect the total economic situation of manual working class families, and its cumulative effect over several years.

In 1906, the local Charity Organisation Society published a Report on the Physical Condition of Fourteen Hundred School-children.[143] As the title implies, this work contains details of the heights, weights and general health of the children studied; it also contains various pieces of information (based on interviews by the "lady visitors" of the C.O.S.) about the family backgrounds of the children. The information for every family is reproduced separately in the published report, and can thus be re-analysed by occupation of household head. The population studied is defined by the children attending a particular school (North Canongate School); located in the old, central working class area, this school is characterised as serving the poorest parts of the city, "yet is has also an admixture of the children of the substantially comfortable and thoroughly respectable working-class"[144]. In my re-analysis of material relating to this population I have included all survey families in selected skilled occupations, and a 10 per cent random sample of the remaining families divided into "miscellaneous skilled" and "semi and unskilled" categories.[145]

143 City of Edin. C.O.S., Report on the Physical Condition of Fourteen Hundred Schoolchildren in the City, London, 1906. It seems from internal evidence that the investigation was conducted during the winter of 1904-5, and all tables based on the material are accordingly dated 1904.

144 Ibid., p.2. For identification of the school, see reference to the study in the printed Minutes of Edinburgh School Board, 6 Dec., 1904.

145 Households were classified by occupations of father, or in a few cases of the oldest adult male wage-earner. 13 households headed by widows, etc. and 6 households headed by non-manual workers and manual workers of unclassifiable skill grade were dropped from the random sample. In assigning occupations from the random sample the same classification was used as for the studies of marriage and the social composition of voluntary organisations reported in a later chapter and discussed in Appendix 1. The commonest occupations in the miscellaneous skilled group (total 17 households) were plumbers and bakers(3 each); the commonest semi and unskilled occupations (total 27 households)were not unexpectedly labourers(16) and transport (mainly carters)(8).

The less prosperous sections of the working class are almost certainly heavily represented among these families; apart from the shoemakers, all the selected skilled trades are under-represented, compared to the industrial population of the city generally at the 1901 census.[146] As so often in historical research, the problem of generalising is substantive, rather than purely statistical in nature. It was decided, then, to treat the selected skilled trades as a population, rather than as representative of any wider population; the 10 per cent random sample is, of course, a sample, but one drawn from the same limited population of families served by North Canongate School. Despite the necessarily limited scope of generalisations based on the survey, the data are nonetheless of considerable interest - not least because the likely bias is a conservative one with regard to hypothesised occupational differences (especially those between skilled and unskilled labour).

The heights of the children were taken as an indicator of family standard of living. As such, they have the unique advantage of reflecting the cumulative incidence of the family's economic condition over the child's lifetime. Any difference in living standards must, moreover, be quite large to produce differences in heights - such differences have, for example, diminished during the twentieth century, although economic inequalities have by no means disappeared.[147] Numbers are unfortunately too small to make

146 The under-representation was most marked in the building trades, whose numbers admittedly had probably declined since the census, with the severe downswing of the building cycle.

147 J. B. de V. Weir, "The Assessment of the Growth of Schoolchildren", British Jour. of Nutrition, 6, 1952. I am indebted to Dr. R. Passmore for advising me about the findings of physiological research in this area.

direct comparisons of the age-specific heights of children in the different occupations. I have therefore used a measure based on the difference of each child's height from the appropriate mean age- and sex-specific height for all children at a school studied by the C.O.S., for comparative purposes (Broughton School) described as "attended by children of small shopkeepers, of skilled artisans, and of clerks"[148]. If the characterisation of Broughton School is correct, it gives an index of differentials in height from the children of the lower middle class - and possibly of the most prosperous elements of the working class. If it is not correct, the comparative figures may still be used to construct an index of differentials from a school whose mean age-specific heights are from one to three inches greater than those of all children at North Canongate School.[149]

[148] C.O.S., op.cit. For identification of the school, Minutes of Edin. School Board, loc.cit. Preliminary analysis revealed little bias due to differences in the age and sex distributions of children in the different occupations (this possibility had to be considered in view of the varying size of class differentials in height at different ages). I have assumed that the figures refer to age last birthday, and have therefore not adopted the now standard procedure of subtracting date of birth from date of measurement (Weir, op.cit., p.22).

[149] Table of heights, C.O.S., op.cit., p.22.

Table 3.10.
Differences in Height from Broughton School of Children Studied by C.O.S., 1904: by occupation of household head

Occupation	N (children)	Mean difference (inches)	S.D.	Coefficient of variation
Printers *	43	1.88	2.29	1.22
Bookbinders	15	1.96	2.20	1.12
Masons	27	2.15	2.72	1.27
Joiners	22	2.33	1.73	0.74
Painters	64	2.40	2.60	1.08
Engineers	17	0.93	3.12	3.35
Metal trades+	25	2.06	2.44	1.18
Shoemakers	32	1.76	2.48	1.41
Miscellaneous skilled	30	1.74	2.19	1.26
Semi and unskilled	40	3.29	2.80	0.85

Source. See footnote 143.

* Compositors, "printers" (sic): these are combined since it is not clear that the authors of the report made a systematic distinction between compositors and machinemen.

\+ Ironmoulders, other iron workers, brass finishers.

Table 3.10 shows occupational mean scores on this index. A certain amount of caution is called for in interpreting these figures. Living standards are not the sole determinant of height; nor, of course, is family income the sole determinant of living standards. The extremely high coefficients of variation presumably reflect the effect of genetic factors. It is, however, noticeable that the coefficients are generally larger for those occupations with the smaller differences from Broughton School (that is, with the tallest children); this may well reflect the

fuller operation of genetic variables among more prosperous groups, whose children are more likely to attain their genetically determined potential heights. The family's place of origin may be another source of variation: children in rural areas were generally taller, and this would presumably be reflected among recent migrants to the city.[150] Despite these complicating factors, the figures are, it is argued, a useful source of evidence. In particular, the wide difference between the engineers' children and their school-fellows supports the notion that engineers belonged to "the elite of the working men". The figure for the painters' children is likewise to be expected from the earlier discussion. The children of the semi and unskilled sample have the largest mean difference of all from Broughton School. The engineers and the semi and unskilled workers are thus both sharply distinguished from a central group comprising most of the skilled trades. The figure for the engineers is 0.81 inches smaller than that for the miscellaneous skilled sample, while that for the semi and unskilled is 0.89 inches larger than that for the painters; the remaining occupations are far more closely bunched. It must, of course, be remembered that the semi and unskilled figure is based on a sample, whereas the selected skilled trades have been treated as populations; a 95 per cent confidence interval gives a minimum value for the unskilled workers' mean of 2.53 inches - still larger than the figure for any skilled trade. This difference between skilled and unskilled workers is, of course, of considerable importance to the theme of this study.

[150] Ibid.

Some of the figures, however, fit less easily into the framework of the earlier analysis. The figures for the masons and joiners - both of which I placed in the group of relatively advantaged skilled trades - are the second and third largest among the skilled trades; the figure for the shoemakers, on the other hand, is the third smallest - although both the sample data for workers' earnings and other evidence suggest that they were far from prosperous. The two building trades may have been affected by the severe building depression of the 1900's, while the masons also suffered technological unemployment with the spread of mechanisation.[151] With regard to the shoemakers, the survey material suggests a polarisation within the trade, so that the mean may conceal a wide range of variation in economic conditions. Thus, although the shoemakers rank next to the engineers in the proportion of children actually taller than the mean for Broughton School, they rank next to the painters and masons in the proportion of children three inches and more shorter.[152] The factor of migration, considered above, may also be especially important in the case of shoemakers: 33 per cent of households, more than in any other occupation were described as "not always" resident in the City.[153] The most skilled, and therefore best

151 See above, footnote 76. Although the height data suggest that the joiners were the less prosperous of the two trades, figures for rent (discussed more fully in ch.5, below) suggest the reverse. This is interesting, in the light of comments about the lower valnerability of joiners to the seasonal and cyclical fluctuations of the building industry. The discrepancy between the height and rent figures may be accounted for by a tendency for entrants to the masons' trade to be exceptionally tall, and to pass this trait on to their children.

152 % of children taller than Broughton: engineers, 29, shoemakers,28; % 3 inches and more shorter: painters, 42, masons, 41, shoemakers, 37.

153 The relevant question reads: "have the family always lived in town?": C.O.S., op.cit., p.5. All figures based on these interviews have to be treated with great caution.

paid shoemakers were said to come from the country, where a thorough craft apprenticeship was still obtainable.[154] Further analysis of the survey material points to an association between migration and economic condition. Although no relationship was found between the children's heights and migration, nearly half (four out of nine) "migrant" shoemakers, but only four out of 18 non-migrants paid 3s.6d. and more weekly rent. The same pattern may be inferred from the fact that only 14 per cent of shoemakers described as in "casual" employment,[155] but half those not so described paid 3s.6d. and more rent; in no other trade was there such a systematic association between rent and "casual" work. The figure for the shoemakers, then, conceals a variation in economic conditions perhaps greater than in any other trade. Shoemakers' families in the survey include, at one extreme, a case earning no more than 16s. weekly, in "casual" employment, paying 2s. rent; this family was described as living in a "very low stair", and the man indulged in "bouts of drinking". At the other end of the scale are men earning 30s. and more weekly, in "regular" employment; one such family (described as "decent, industrious") paid as much as 5s. 5d. rent, the husband played the harmonium at a Mission Hall and the wife was learning the piano.[156]

Like the earnings study, the survey data refer to a rather limited sub-population, rather than to the whole population of skilled manual wokers. Yet the two sub-populations are defined in different ways - by the employment records of firms at particular

[154] Gordon, op.cit., p.155.

[155] "Whether work regular or casual?": C.O.S., loc.cit. This question is undoubtedly still more problematic than most of those asked.

[156] C.O.S., op.cit., cases 573, 647.

dates, and by the families of pupils at a school in central Edinburgh. And the two sub-populations may have been biased in different directions: whereas the nature of the business archives available, and the statistical design used imply a bias to the more regularly employed men on the pay-rolls of successful and expanding firms, the bias of the C.O.S. survey is towards unskilled labour, and the less prosperous sections of skilled labour resident in the old, central working class area of the city. The fact that the findings from these two sub-populations are broadly consistent with each other,[157] and with predictions on the basis of other sources strengthens the conclusions that can be drawn. Taken together, then, the three types of evidence used in this chapter - aggregate indicators, impressionistic accounts of occupational experiences, and quantitative material for more clearly defined sub-populations - do give a fairly consistent picture of the diversity of economic situation in the manual working class of Victorian Edinburgh.

[157] The main exception being the building trades, discussed above.

CHAPTER 4

CLASS SITUATION: INDUSTRIAL STRUCTURE AND WORK SITUATIONS

Differentiation within the working class was not confined to earnings and economic condition. It was also a feature of the day to day experience of factory or workshop life. Differences in work situation have, of course, remained important in the twentieth century; in the nineteenth they were, on all the available evidence, still more marked. Many sectors of nineteenth century industry depended heavily on the skill, initiative and know-how of the craftsman, rather than on bureaucratised systems of managerial control.[1] The relationship of the craftsman to less skilled grades of the work-force likewise differed from that which has prevailed in more recent times. The task of the labourer, for example in building or engineering, was to fetch and carry for the skilled man, rather than to perform routinised semi skilled operations allocated by management; where production processes did involve semi skilled tasks these were often performed under the immediate direction of skilled workers, rather than of specialised supervisory grades (as in printing, where each skilled machineman had charge of one machine and its complement of semi skilled boys, apprentices or women). This "craft administration of production"[2] clearly had important implications for the work experience of the artisan, his relations with employers, managers and other grades of manual labour.

[1] For the development of methods of industrial management in the nineteenth century: R. Bendix, Work and Authority in Industry, New York, 1963, 1st. paperback edn., ch.4; Hobsbawm, "Custom, Wages and Workload", op.cit.; Pollard, op.cit.

[2] A. L. Stinchcombe, "Bureaucratic and Craft Administration of Production", Administrative Science Quarterly, 4, 1959.

It would, however, be a mistake to ignore the considerable variation in work situation in the different skilled trades. Equally one must not exaggerate the technological and organisational conservatism of British industry, and consequently underestimate the extent to which craft methods were a rational response to particular economic circumstances.[3] Where circumstances changed, whether as a result of the growing scale of enterprise, new market opportunities, new technical possibilities or new competitive pressures, the skilled worker might experience changes in his work situation. I will analyse the work situations of the skilled trades in a comparative framework. The first section of this chapter examines data for plant size and capitalisation, while the second gives a more detailed account of processes of production and the organisation of work.

i. Plant Size and Capitalisation

The main data for plant size and capital investment are presented in table 4.1. These data are probably not altogether reliable, and are intended merely to give a broad indication of the relative positions in different industries. But there is at least a measure of agreement between the two sets of figures for firm size,[4] and certain divergencies may be explicable by the different categories used in the census.[5]

[3] Cf. S. B. Saul, "The Market and the Development of the Mechanical Engineering Industries in Britain, 1860-1914", Ec.H.R., 2nd. ser., 20, 1967.

[4] There is a rank correlation (tau) of 0.647 between the two sets of figures.

[5] For example, the 1901 figure for bakers is based on the census category for "makers" (distinguished from "dealers" for the first time in that year), whereas many small firms (presumably included in the 1871 returns) combined making and dealing.

Table 4.1.
Firm Size and Capital in Local Industries, 1871 and 1901

	1871 (Factory Returns) Steam h.p. per worker	1871 (Factory Returns) Mean Workers per employer	1901 (Census) Mean workers per employer
Printing *	0.10	47	74
Masons	0.08	18	14 +
Joiners	0.03	9	9 +
Painters	----	7	8 +
Engineering@	0.14	83	43 ø
Shoemakers	----	6	8
Tailors	----	9	19
Precious metals, jewellry	----	8	6
Clock & Watch	----	4	4
Tanners, curriers	0.29	19	14
Bakers	0.04	4	16
Cabinetmakers	0.03	14	10
Glass	0.21	119	120
Rubber	0.45	337	262

Source: Calculated from: Return of Factories, PP 1871, LXII; census occupation tables, 1901.

* "Printers" and "bookbinders" combined (also litho printer, etc. 1901): this seemed the best course in view of the doubtful status in the figures of the many firms combining both operations.

\+ Employers described as "builders" are added to those in specific trades.

@ "Machine makers" and "foundries" combined, 1871; all trades in census order X.3,1901; the same point applies as in printing.

ø This is undoubtedly an underestimate, unavoidable because of the problem of blacksmiths. Journeyman smiths worked either in large engineering shops, or in small blacksmiths (smiths account for 55 out of 164 employers in the engineering group). Excluding smiths (both employers and workers) gives a figure of 62 workers per firm, but this is still an underestimate, since we have thereby excluded a large number of smiths employed in engineering shops, as well as those in small smithies.

Despite these difficulties, we may conclude that the printing and engineering trades were likely to work in larger enterprises than the building trades or the shoemakers: in both the 1871 and 1901 figures there is a break, with none of the industries falling within the range 20-40. This certainly points to the validity of a broad contrast between the local consumer and building crafts, and larger scale more modern industries. There is, moreover, an association between firm size and the application of steam power: all but one of the industries with 0.10 or more h.p. per worker have 40 or more workers per firm. Of the building trades, masons have both the largest firm size and the largest use of steam power (probably accounted for, at this date, by steam cranes in the stone yards).

Given the rather dubious status of the figures, we have to be more cautious about inferring structural change between the two dates. Apart from the problem of different classification procedures, some differences may be accounted for by the fact that the relevant legislation in 1871 covered all workers in printing, engineering, glass and rubber, virtually all cabinet-makers, 80 per cent of tanners and curriers, 61 per cent of coachmakers and between 32 and 54 per cent of the other industries.[6] The apparent increase in firm size in printing, however, is in line with other evidence. The final quarter of the nineteenth century saw the migration of most of the leading firms to purpose built suburban factories: "Many of the larger printing-offices have, within the last thirty years, removed

[6] Numbers in Factory Returns, as a proportion of estimated totals in the relevant occupations (average of 1861 and 1881).

their premises to the more commodious outskirts of the city"[7].

The figures under discussion have to be qualified in two respects. First, of course, we have to consider the question of the likely range about the means shown. Here the data are far scantier, but they do indicate the existence of several firms considerably above the mean size for their industries, especially in printing and engineering and metal working. Nelson's, undoubtedly the largest local printing works (as well as the most technically advanced[8]) were said to have 440 workers about 1867; the same source gives a figure of 350 for Milne's brass foundry.[9] As early as 1853 one ironworks had 700-800 workers.[10] Table 4.2 gives some figures for particular firms at the turn of the century: all of them, it is worth noting, are - not unexpectedly, in view of the pre-eminence implied by the survival of records - larger than the mean firm size for their industries indicated by the census. There is, moreover, some direct evidence for the increase in plant size. The Scotsman newspaper employed 32 printers (compositors and machinemen) in 1855, 103 ten years later; Constable's employed 84 in 1856, rising to 256 in 1900.[11] For the building trades we have no evidence of this sort, but it should be noted that firm size (as given in table 4.1) is less meaningful here than in other industries; the work-force in building would often be assembled for particular projects, and

7 Ballantyne Press, op.cit., p.157. 8 See below, footnote 39.

9 Bremner, op.cit., pp.504, 136. 10 Edin. News, 10 Sept., 1853.

11 Scotsman wage books; "List of Parties Employed", Constable; Constable wage books.

gangs on large sites might well be much larger than is indicated by the figures. In 1876 36 employers were reported to have conceded a rise to 600 joiners; this indicates a mean firm size about twice that shown by the 1871 returns.[12]

Table 4.2.
Numbers employed by Various Firms, April, 1900

Firm	Industry	Department	Number Employed
Constable	Printing	Compositors	97
		" " female	12
		Machine room	64
		Others	83
		All	256
Bartholmew	Litho printing (maps)	Machine men	9
		" " girls	11
		Others	79
		All	99
Allan	Shoemakers	All	45 *
Hamilton & Inches	Silversmiths etc.	All	15

Source: Wage books of firms. Numbers were counted as at the first pay day in April, clerical, retail and managerial employees being excluded.

* This firm had been considerably larger in some earlier years (e.g. in 1890).

The second qualification is that department size, rather than overall firm size is the important factor in the worker's immediate environment. Table 4.2 therefore gives department size in the two printing firms for compositors and machinemen (Bartholmew, being lithographic rather than letterpress printers, had no compositors). The implications of department (as of firm)

[12] Edin. Central B., Assoc. Joiners, Minutes, 29 May, 1876.

size depend partly on the organisation of work in the particular process on which the men are engaged; the following discussion must therefore be amplified by reference to the account of production processes given below (section ii). In the composing room large numbers of skilled men might work together, whereas about half the machine room workers would be semi skilled boys, apprentices or women. Towards the turn of the century Neill's had accommodation for 200 compositors in a special office they opened for government work;[13] in 1865 the Scotsman employed 73 compositors and 30 in the machine room.[14] In the foundries, large numbers of skilled ironmoulders seem likewise to have worked in the same shops: in 1900 three foundries had 60 or more union members, and another five had 20 or more (these are, of course, minimum figures for the totals employed: an estimated 46 per cent of moulders were unionised at this time).[15] According to their union secretary, the ratio of skilled moulders to foundry labourers was 11:6 in 1893.[16]

The available evidence therefore suggests that firms in printing and engineering were larger and more heavily capitalised than firms in building and shoemaking. There is also some evidence for a growth in firm size during the period, especially in printing. The wider implications of firm size are, as Ingham has pointed out, less clear-cut than is often supposed.[17]

13 History of the Firm of Neill and Co., Edin., 1900, p.14.

14 Scotsman wage books.

15 A.I.M.S., Reports, membership figures for various shops in Edinburgh and Leith: for estimated unionisation below, ch.9, table 9.1

16 R.C.Lab., group A, PP 1893-4 XXXII, Q 23454; there were also 4000 - 5000 irondressers and 4000 "boys" to the 11000 moulders.

17 G. K. Ingham, Size of Industrial Organisation and Worker Behaviour, Cambridge, 1970.

Bureaucratisation is an intervening variable in the operation of the "size-effect", and depends on technology, standardisation of products and work-tasks, etc., not just simply on size.[18] Moreover the effect of increasing size is not a uniform and linear one: Ingham follows Caplow in hypothesising a threshold of about thirty members, above which the constraints of size will produce different organisational patterns.[19] All the larger firms with which we are concerned therefore fall within Caplow's "medium-size" category; although integration can no longer be achieved through face to face interaction of all possible pairs of members, it is still possible "that one or more members, including a leader or leaders, can interact directly with all the others"[20]. There is thus the possibility of a personalised style of management, mitigating the reliance on purely formal bureaucratic controls. At least one big local employer seems to have adopted such a style:

> "Two navvies were engaged one day at Hope Park turning a crank when Mr. William Nelson was passing. He paused for a moment and looked at the men, who seemed to go about their work rather leisurely. He then came forward to them, and asked, in a gruff manner, if they could not work a little harder and turn the crank quicker. They answered at once 'they could not; it was a stiff job, and very fatiguing.' 'Nonsense', he replied; 'let me try.' Seizing one of the handles, he

[18] Ibid., pp.19, 32-3.

[19] Ibid., pp.63-5.

[20] T. Caplow, Principles of Organisation, New York, 1964, p.26: quoted Ingham, op.cit., p.64.

> did try; but, after giving the handle two or three turns, desisted, for it made the perspiration pour from him. Then he remarked, 'Ay, just go on as you've been doing;' and, putting his hand into his pocket, added, 'there's half-a-crown between you.'[21]

Another factor mitigating the growth of bureaucratised management was the possibility of solving the problem of control through the institutions of craft organisation. Where methods of working were relatively stable, and expertise resided in the apprenticed skilled worker rather than in specialised supervisory and technical strata of the work-force, control could be achieved through a process of negotiated understandings with autonomous work-groups. This was to a greater or lesser extent true in all those industrial processes making intensive use of skilled labour, particularly those with craft technologies originating before the Industrial Revolution. The importance of craft organisation is indicated by a more detailed account of production processes, to which I now turn.

ii. Production Processes

Printing:

The two basic letterpress printing processes - the arrangement of movable types to form the text of the matter to be reproduced, and the application of the set types to paper by means of the press - had long been regarded as separate occupations, at least in the major centres, such as Edinburgh. There is a clear distinction between compositors and pressmen in the History of the Art of Printing (Edinburgh, 1713).[22] The technique of type

21 D. Wilson, William Nelson: a memoir, Edin., 1889, privately printed, p.73.

22 E. Howe (ed.), The Trade: passages from the literature of the printing craft, London, 1943, pp.26-8.

setting by hand changed little until the advent of the linotype and monotype, the first really efficient type setting machines, in the late nineteenth century; these machines were at first confined largely to newspaper work, where speed was naturally at a premium. A large part of the hand compositor's skill resided in the correct spacing of the matter, the "making up" of lines into pages, and general familiarity with the range of sizes and styles of type and ability to find his way around the case room. There was thus a considerable measure of variety and initiative in his work.[23] The growing size of firms, and changes in the other processes in the industry (especially, of course, the enormous increase in productivity from the application of steam power to the printing press[24]) must nonetheless have affected the hand compositor. There is some evidence of a growth of specialisation in particular classes of work, and particular parts of the type setting process. This must, in the first place, have been promoted by the division between piece and time workers and the consequent interest of employers in allocating the better paid items on the piece scale to the time men.[25] The introduction of a number of female compositors, following the strike of 1872-3, led to more specialisation: men concentrated on the more skilled and strenuous tasks - cofrections, the heavy work of carrying "formes" and "making up", etc.[26]

[23] For accounts of the compositor's work: R. Blauner, Alienation and Freedom, Chicago, 1964, pp.40-1; Cannon, op.cit., p.229.

[24] The reduction in costs in "jobbing" work has been estimated at 70%: Child, op.cit., p.299.

[25] See above, ch.3, sect.ii.

[26] Macdonald (ed.), op.cit., p.48.

Newspaper work demanded rather different aptitudes from book or jobbing work: the newspaper compositor "should be expeditious and careful", and "good spacing has very largely to be sacrificed"[27]. There may thus have been a relative decline in the versatility and initiative of the compositor, which led some commentators to refer to the "deteriorating result of the close adherence of so many of our larger printing businesses to the system of division of labour"[28].

The skilled machinemen worked in a rapidly changing technological environment. The powered press created new kinds of skill, as well as making possible the expansion and cheapening of the output of all sorts of printed matter; the machineman was generally agreed to be a superior class of worker to the old hand pressman (who used to be known as "pig" from the grunting occasioned by the heavy work of pulling the bar).[29] There was, throughout the period, a constant proliferation of new, faster, more specialised machines.[30] The skilled machineman had to master this changing technology: "If youths who do not know (and men, too, for they exist) would only endeavour to help themselves by studying the current literature of their trade - and there is good and plenty of it in our own business - they might be able to help themselves forward very materially", urged the introduction to one technical handbook.[31] The

[27] S. T. Jacobi, Printing, London, 1913, 5th. edn., p.129.

[28] Letter in S.T.C., March, 1896.

[29] Edin. News, 25 May, 1853; S. Kinnear, "The Future of Our Young Compositors", in scrapbook of his writings, in Edin. Public Library, p.284 (dated July, 1891, source unattributed); J. Child, Industrial Relations in the British Printing Industry, London, 1967, p.37; future references to Child are to this book, rather than to the same author's thesis.

[30] Child, op.cit., pp.108-9, 158-9. [31] "Old Machine Manager", op.cit., p.vii.

machineman had an overall responsibility for his machine, as well as for supervising its complement of semi skilled feeders, etc. One common type of machine had 11 preparatory steps and 18 possible adjustments during running.[32] The initial adjustment needed to ensure a clean and even impression demanded considerable skill and judgement.[33] Here again, versatility and initiative characterised the work situation of the skilled worker. The machinemen seem, however, to have been more subject to the exigencies of managerial control as well as of technology than the compositors. At Constable's machinemen were liable to fines for spoilt work.[34] The less stable technology, as well as the capital costs involved, therefore increased the role of management:

> "The manager of a machine-room should be a man of firm character, and one who has a large amount of mechanical ingenuity and experience. The management of the machine department needs careful watchfulness".[35]

In bookbinding a series of technical innovations, the sub-division of processes and the adoption of cloth bindings for the new mass market restricted the skilled men to certain specialised tasks within a system of batch production.[36] This rationalisation was evidently carried furthest at Nelson's, producing cheap editions for a newly developed mass market.[37] This led, according

[32] Ibid., pp.8-10. [33] Blauner, op.cit., pp.41-2.

[34] Constable, press department wage books.

[35] A. Oldfield, A Practical Manual of Typography, London, n.d., c1891, p.115.

[36] C. White, "A Century of Bookbinding in Edinburgh", Edin.Jour. of Science, Technology and Photographic Art, 16, 1941, p.15.

[37] Wilson, op.cit., pp.68-9; Bremner, op.cit., pp.502-4; D. Balsillie, "Nelson's 7d. Library: how it is produced", Bookbinding Trades Jour., 1908.

to one authority, to an increased level of skill in those tasks still performed by the apprenticed man - especially the "laying on" of lettering - whose "touch" was no longer spoilt by working at the heavier parts of the process.[38] Sub-division and mechanisation clearly continued throughout the period: at Nelson's, whereas in 1867 "a large amount of hand-labour is indispensable", by 1908 the only hand operation was the "laying on" of gold lettering.[39] By the 1900's, then, binding was "subdivided to such a degree that a man could be ... taught some particular part of the process in a few months."[40] Bookbinding thus exemplifies the adaptation of an old craft to skilled operations within a factory system of rationalised mass production. In the mid nineteenth century the Edinburgh News commented on the work discipline of the bookbinders; the men were punctual, there was little absenteeism or drinking during working hours, and generally "the very best order is maintained in the workshops".[41]

Building:

In the building industry there was little change in technology, and the need to assemble a work-force according to the demands of particular projects made "craft administration" the most viable form of organisation.[42] There were differences between the building trades, especially in the extent of specialisation and sub-divisions of skill within the trade. The most versatile, according to the Edinburgh News, were the joiners; the joiner was "comptroller-general of the whole work" in housebuilding, and was therefore required to work from drawings.[43] (Joiners might also

[38] White, loc.cit.

[39] Bremner, op.cit., p.503; Balsillie, op.cit., p.285.

[40] Gordon, op.cit., p.149.

[41] Edin.News, 30 July, 1853.

[42] Stinchcombe, op.cit.

[43] Edin.News, 9 Oct., 1852.

of course, be employed in manufacturing workshops). The masons were also versatile: "Nearly all Edinburgh masons can cut mouldings, however difficult"; but they were divided into two distinct branches, hewers and builders.[44] The painters, on the other hand, had marked "professional gradations", arising partly from the influx of un-apprenticed labour; consequently, "there are very few painters indeed, in Edinburgh, who excel in every branch of their business."[45] Skilled building workers, especially the masons, worked with labourers; the craftsman: labourer ratio was apparently similar to that in the ironfoundries, with 0.52 labourers to every mason at the 1901 census. There were strong customs regarding working practices and job demarcation: "Masons, having trade privileges, were bound to maintain them, without submitting to have them discussed by any other body of men, not even by labourers who might be subject to the injustice of those privileges."[46]

Engineering:

The second half of the nineteenth century saw the diffusion of the new techniques developed for the construction of the locomotives and textile machines of the Industrial Revolution, and the growth of specialised branches of engineering.[47]

[44] Ibid., 2 Oct., 1852: two thirds of the Edinburgh masons are said to be hewers, and to be mostly from rural areas, whereas the builders were mainly Edinburgh-born.

[45] Ibid., 20 Nov., 1852.

[46] A. Somerville, The Autobiography of a Working Man, London, 1951 (original edn., 1848), p.88.

[47] K. Burgess, "Technological Change and the 1852 Lock-out in the British Engineering Industry", International Review of Social History, 14, 1969; J. B. Jeffries, The Story of the Engineers, London, 1945, pp.51-7. The following discussion of the engineering industry draws heavily on Jeffries.

Although Edinburgh was not a centre of engineering, it nonetheless contained firms with leading positions in specialised branches of the industry. Bertram's, for example, already were prominent in the market for paper making machinery in the 1850's;[48] despite the decline of Leith shipbuilding there was also a marine engineering sector, notably in the making of specialised castings and pumps and other small pieces of ships' machinery, as well as some repair work at Leith and Granton.[49] With this development of the industry the new skills of fitters, turners and the other trades emerged. That Edinburgh followed the national pattern in this respect is revealed by the fact that an analysis of new members of the A.S.E. shows the same preponderance of fitters and turners locally as Jeffries found nationally.[50] The skilled turner set and operated lathes, while other machine tools tended increasingly to be manned by less skilled machinists. Engineering products in the capital goods sector were generally made to order, rather than for stock, even if the range of designs was standardised. The work of the skilled engineer was therefore likely to vary from job to job. The relatively high tolerances of machined components at this time made fitting dependent on the skill of the fitter.[51] Nonetheless, the steady improvement in machine tools must have had some impact. The use of excess numbers of apprentices as semi skilled machinists was alleged to be especially bad in the Edinburgh District during the 1890's;[52] in

48 Edin. News, 3 Aug., 1853.

49 Bremner, op.cit., pp.74-5; J. C. Smail, "The Engineering and Alied Trades", Institute of Public Administration, op.cit.

50 Trades of new members of Edin. and Leith branches, from A.S.E., AR, compared to distribution of national membership in Jeffries, op.cit., p.59.

51 Jeffries, op.cit., pp.122-4; D. S. Landes, The Unbound Prometheus, Cambridge, 1969, pp.305-7.

52 A.S.E., QR, May, 1894.

1908 a guide to employment for young people in Scotland noted the emergence of the machinist, "something between labourers and tradesmen" - lathes, however, remained the preserve of apprenticed turners.[53]

There was, on the other hand, a sector of the metal working industry that early adopted the "division of labour principle". In brass founding the existence of a mass market for gas and plumbing fittings encouraged standardisation and sub-division; high piece rates were paid for repetition turning of standardised components.[54] At Milton House brass foundry in the 1860's the moulding work - the making of a mould in sand from a wooden pattern, into which the moulten metal was poured, generally regarded as a skilled trade - was said to be "easy" and done largely by boys; women were employed in the repetition drilling of gas burners, and meters were assembled on the batch mass production system.[55] In the iron foundries, although moulding was "a delicate operation, and requires both tact and taste", much of the work was "mechanical" as well as "very heavy" - a large part of the iron trade in Edinburgh apparently consisted of the mass production of standardised gates, fencing, girders, etc.[56] The making of castings for machinery, on the other hand, no doubt required a greater degree of skill and precision. The work experience of engineering and foundry workers thus depended to a large extent on the sector of metal working in which they were employed, and especially on the degree of product standardisation and on whether production was for stock or to order.

[53] Gordon, op.cit., pp.214-5. [54] Edin.News, 10 Sept., 1853.

[55] Bremner, op.cit., pp.136-8. [56] Edin.News, 20 Aug., 10 Sept., 1853.

Shoemakers:

Shoemakers traditionally worked at home and therefore by hand. This remained the case throughout the trade, until the provision of workshops by the "honourable" employers, apparently in the 1860's (and home work no doubt persisted in the unorganised sections thereafter). Despite the prevalence of home work the process was sub-divided by the 1850's: the cutting out of the leather, "closing" (or the sewing together of the uppers) and "making" (or the attaching of the sole to the uppers) were all separate processes (though not perhaps altogether separate occupations).[57] "Making" was said to be the most skilled and arduous task.[58] Working at home, "the men are thus their own masters, in so far as the disposal of their time is concerned", with a marked aversion to workshop employment, a "hereditary and deeply-rooted dislike to be called a servant".[59] Mayhew similarly related the London shoemakers' reputation for cantankerousness to the individualism engendered by their work situation:

> "They appear to be a stern, uncompromising and reflecting race. This, perhaps, is to be accounted for by the solititude of their employment developing their own internal resources ... The shoemakers are distinguished for the severity of their manners and habits of thought, and the suspicion that seems to pervade their character."[60]

[57] Ibid., 19 March, 1853. [58] Ibid., 19 March, 1853.
[59] Ibid., 2 May, 1853. [60] Thompson and Yeo (eds.), op.cit., p.232.

The advent of workshops seems to have been linked to the introduction of the sewing machine in the 1860's: in 1863, the North Briton noted the improvement in sobriety and work discipline associated with this trend.[61] After the introduction of sewing machines and workshops the mass and bespoke sectors differ increasingly in their techniques of production. During the last quarter of the nineteenth century the making of shoes for the mass market was further mechanised and broken down into semi skilled operations.[62] This process was, of course, associated with the localisation of the new factory shoe industry in Leicester, Northampton and other centres: that it nonetheless had effects in Edinburgh is indicated by the existence from 1881 of a branch of the Boot and Shoe Rivetters - the predecessor of the National Union of Boot and Shoe Operatives - which catered for workers in the mechanised sector.[63] The large luxury market in the city, on the other hand, supported a number of "first-class firms who make a speciality of hand-made goods".[64] Thus, the mechanisation of production for the mass market increased the occupational distinctiveness of the craft shoemaker - whereas the old sweated trade had used the same basic techniques, albeit less competently. Shoemaking is an instance of the persistence of craft methods for the luxury market in an industry otherwise using mechanised mass production techniques. Both sectors appear to have existed in Edinburgh, but the local importance of a wealthy market no doubt made the craft sector of greater significance than in most large cities.

61 N.B., 18 Aug., 1863.

62 See A. Fox, A History of the National Union of Boot and Shoe Operatives, Oxford, 1958, ch.2.

63 T.C. Minutes, 11 Oct., 1881: for the Boot and Shoe Operatives, see Fox, op.cit.

64 Gordon, op.cit., p.155.

Skilled labour therefore enjoyed a good deal of autonomy in the work place. Even in quite large plants production was organised by bargaining with autonomous work-groups, rather than through a bureaucratised system of direct managerial control. This tendency was in many respects a reflection of particular market and technical conditions; there is certainly evidence of sub-division and rationalisation where market conditions encouraged this - for example, in the binding of cheap editions at Nelson's and the mass production of standardised metal fittings. There is thus a considerable range of variation in the scale of industry, the incidence of technical change, and the work situation of the various skilled trades.

The artisan's awareness of this work experience - and of any deterioration he felt in his work situation, from the increased scale of industry, sub-division of processes and intensified work discipline - is, of course, related to patterns of occupational socialisation and expectation. In analysing the work situation it is, indeed, hard to separate the objective situation from the cultural milieu of the occupation, which conditioned the perceptions and expectations of the skilled workers. In the second part of this study I attempt to give some account of the culture of the artisan, taking as my point of departure the foregoing analysis of work experience. In moving from the structural to the cultural aspects of differentiation within the working class it is necessary to begin by considering the occupational community of the craft, the way in which the distinctive work experience of the artisan formed a particular kind of work-based social identity and social imagery.

PART II: THE CULTURE OF THE VICTORIAN ARTISAN

CHAPTER 5

COMMUNITY LIFE AND SOCIAL STATUS

In the three chapters which make up part one of this study I showed that there were fairly clear-cut differences in economic and work situation in the manual working class of Victorian Edinburgh, and argued that these differences in fact constituted a set of inter-related, cumulative advantages and deprivations, such that we can talk of a systematic stratification within the working class. This substantiates the labour aristocracy hypothesis, so far as structural differentiation is concerned. But this conclusion by no means exhausts the topic: indeed, it is of interest, in the context of the present work, mainly because it is a precondition to posing the more interesting, but more difficult problem of the cultural formation of separate working class strata. The task in this and the two following chapters will be to examine the way in which working people, in their lives outside the workplace, became conscious of social differences. Part two of the study is therefore concerned with the cultural dimension of class formation: the styles of life, courses of personal social action, and available social imagery through which the inequalities of working class life were culturally mediated. In the present chapter I discuss the background of old established occupational sub-cultures, from which the newer social aspirations and more widely based kinds of social identity of the later nineteenth century emerged; then I look more closely at the nature of these newer trends, with reference to residential patterns and urban neighbourhoods, leisure activities and patterns of social segregation, as reflected in marriage.

i. The Culture of the Craft

The skilled worker's attachment to the occupational community of his trade was an important focus of his social life, not only in working hours, but also in leisure time. Recent evidence suggests that this occupationally based social identity has continued to distinguish the skilled stratum of the working class.[1] It would seem that the social contacts of his craft played a still larger part in the life of the nineteenth century artisan. The popular culture of old established urban centres like Edinburgh was marked by a series of occupational sub-cultures. This older way of life was still, at the mid-nineteenth century, within living memory. Memories of the turn-outs of the Edinburgh trades in their craft regalia, for the royal visit to the city in 1822, and again at the Reform demonstration in 1832, were handed down to younger generations of journeymen.[2] At a less formal but more pervasive level, the daily contacts of the workshop carried over into non-working time. Alexander Somerville and Hugh Miller both describe drinking customs in the Edinburgh trades.[3] The very distinction between "work" and "leisure" was, indeed, less marked than it has since become - if only because of the long working hours and the tendency to cook, eat and drink in the workshop; flowers and birds were kept in the printing office where Samuel Kinnear served his apprenticeship.[4]

1 See, for example: Blauner, op.cit., p.50; Cannon, op.cit.; S.M. Lipset et al, Union Democracy, Glencoe, Illinois, 1956, esp.chs. 5-7; R. F. Hamilton, "The Behaviour and Values of Skilled Workers", in A. B. Shostak and W. Gomberg (eds.), Blue-collar World, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1964.

2 Fleming, op.cit., p.21; S.T.C., Oct., 1881.

3 Somerville, op.cit., p.59; H. Miller, My Schools and Schoolmasters, Edin., 1854, pp.320-3.

4 Kinnear, Reminiscences, p.20, p.27.

A strong sense of occupational identity thus helped form the social consciousness of the Victorian artisan. The craft pride of the occupational sub-culture, and its emphasis on the value of manual labour distinghuished the artisans as a social group, and ultimately contributed to a wider consciousness of class.[5] Craft tradition provided a social imagery of class identification. The Reform demonstration of 1866 affords an example of this process.

> "The Various Trades of the City walked in Procession. The Bookbinders turned out to the Number of One Hundred and Twenty four, they carried some fine specimens of Binding, along with a Flag and several Banners with Mottos appropriate to the Occasion the Day was enjoyed by all who took a Part in the Proceedings."[6]

In this procession the display of artisan skills, and the use of metaphor based on occupation supported the claim of working men, as "the producers of wealth"[7] to political rights. Thus, the printing trades had a compositor at work on the back of a lorry and lithographers with a machine in operation, running off copies of an appropriate political cartoon. The smiths, "the very types of the honest blacksmith Longfellow has immortalised", had an anvil; the masons were each dressed in "a white apron trimmed with blue, and masonic emblems"; the plumbers carried a "shower bath, with a

[5] Mallet, op.cit., p.38 comments that the nineteenth century craftsman ("ouvrier professionel") was distinguished by a "consciousness of being a producer" ("conscience d'être un producteur"). The value systems of craft sub-cultures, as well as various kinds of social theory, may thus be one source of the notion of labour as the producer of all wealth.

[6] Bookbinders Union Soc. Minutes, 17 Nov., 1866.

[7] This phrase was used by Alexander Campbell, the Glasgow Owenite, addressing the crowd: N.B., 21 Nov., 1866. The information and quotations that follow also come from this report of the demonstration.

most uncomfortable looking inmate, represented to be 'Bob Lowe bathing'"; the coopers had "two automatata ... hammering a cask, their work being described as 'Down with the Tories'"; and so on. Many of the slogans drew on occupation as a source of metaphor. The masons, for example, had the slogan "justice to the line and equity to plummet", the shoemakers, inevitably, "true to the last", the tobbacco workers, "may the designs of our enemies vanish in smoke".[8] The popular politics of urban-industrial society seem here to be in process of emergence from the craft pageantry of an earlier period.[9] As the Scotsman commented:

> "In 1832 it was thought important to defend the Edinburgh demonstrations from imputations that the working men would not join in them. On Saturday the processionists were artisans exclusively."[10]

Occupational sub-cultures thus played an important part in the growth of political radicalism - as well as of trade unionism - in the 1860's. And these sub-cultures remained distinguishing feature of the artisan stratum; many of the new leisure pursuits of the later nineteenth century, for example, were carried on by work- or occupation-based organisations.[11] But it is likely that there was a relative decline in the importance of the occupational community. A number of considerations lead to the conclusion that the life of the craft was becoming less all-pervasive than it had been. In the first place,

[8] The above descriptions of the demonstration are all from the North Briton, 21 Nov., 1866.

[9] Thompson, op.cit., esp. chs. 8 and 12, describes this process with reference to England earlier in the century.

[10] Scotsman, 19 Nov., 1866.

[11] The printers, for example, had an inter-firm football league: S.T.C., July, 1895.

changes in occupational structure point to a relative - and sometimes absolute - decline of many old established crafts, and the emergence of new skilled occupations - such as engineers or printing machinemen - without the long history that figures in the occupational consciousness of the older trades.[12] In the older crafts themselves, various structural changes undermined the all-pervasive, face-to-face occupational community. The increase in scale, both of the urban settlement and of industrial enterprises, surely had this effect. In the more important skilled trades it was already, by the mid-nineteenth century, impossible for a man to know personally and be known to all his fellow-craftsman;[13] and there was almost certainly an increase in the mobility of labour. The location of new industries around the railways and the Union Canal, and the growth of large new tracts of working class housing contrasted with the typical setting of the old artisan sub-cultures - a town-centre back-street mixture of craft workshops and the dwellings of shopkeepers, artisans and the various other strata of the common people. At the same time, the growing scale of enterprises and the concentration of ownership led to the "passage from the old outlook of 'the Trade' to the duality of the masters' organisations, on the one hand, and the trade unions on the other".[14] The demand for shorter hours was no doubt in part a response to these structural changes; but the shortening of the working day also itself contributed to the separation of "work" from "leisure" and "home", and thus to the disintegration of occupational communities.[15]

[12] For changes in occupational structure, see above, ch.2, sect.iii.

[13] At the 1861 census trades with more than 1000 males aged 20 and over included printers, masons, joiners, shoemakers, tailors and cabinetmakers.

[14] Thompson, op.cit., p.466.

[15] On the whole topic of changing attitudes to "work" and perceptions of time, see E. P. Thompson, "Time, Work-discipline and Industrial Capitalism", Past and Present, 38, 1967.

Thus, although the occupational culture remained an important element in the social identity of the artisan, it became less all-pervasive; the milieu of "the trade" became one of a range of contexts in which the worker lived his daily life. The change is noted in the reminiscences of a hatter, published in 1861:

> "the great part of the labouring classes may be said to have vegetated in their circles. Tradesmen, in the bustling life of industry, although they were sharpened by intercommunion, their ideas wanted breadth as well as tolerance."[16]

The writer relates this to the growth of new types of leisure pursuit. Whereas previously there were "no lectures soirées or concerts for the unwashed"; in the 1860's: "amusements are now of a refining and elevating nature".[17] This implies that the break-up of the old occupational sub-cultures was not simply a matter of the negative effect of the structural changes discussed above; there was also the positive attraction of new styles of life and sources of social identity. A syndrome of attitudes and behaviour patterns, linked to the values of "respectability", contributed to the cultural formation of an upper artisan stratum. This process, to which I now turn, had, I would argue, a dual significance. On one hand, it broke down the traditional fragmentation of the working class into a series of occupational communities. But in doing so it fostered new, "horizontal" divisions between working class strata. The life style of the "respectable" artisan tended to project a sense of social superiority, a self-conscious cultural exclusion of less favoured working class groups.

[16] N.B., 27 April, 1866. [17] Ibid.

ii. Styles of Life and Associational Patterns: Residence, Leisure and Marriage

In the remainder of this chapter I analyse patterns of residence, recreation and inter-marriage, in an attempt to show that tendencies of social segregation, and the separation of a "superior" artisan stratum from the remainder of the working class can be discerned in all these aspects of working class life. Thus the rather fragementary evidence relating to the first of my topics, housing, suggests not merely a differentiation in housing conditions, but also the attachment of particular cultural meanings to distinctions between types of housing and urban neighbourhoods.

A number of sources comment on the social mixture to be found in the tenements of the Old Town during the early to mid nineteenth century, the "different grades in the social scale (for even among the working classes there are many gradations) overlying each other with nearly all the regularity of geological strata."[18] Proximity to work, the location of the craft workshops among the tenements of the Old Town and in the back streets of the New Town was an important feature of this urban scene. The location of many newer and larger scale industrial enterprises in newly developing areas away from the town centres thus contributed to the changes of the period. The effect of the early slum clearances (beginning in Edinburgh with Chambers' Improvement of the 1860's) and of the acquisition of urban land for railways and other town centre developments is also well known; whereas the more prosperous of the former slum dwellers were able to move to new and superior

[18] J. Symington, "The Working Men's Home", prize essay in J. Begg, DD, Happy Homes for Working Men and How to Get Them, London, 1866, p.161.

housing, the effect on the poorer, and probably more numerous group was to aggravate the overall housing shortage.[19] In one local instance: "The houses that were erected were too good for the class of tenants that we displaced in the lower part of the town; and the consequence was that the houses were never let; but they were exposed for sale they were very eagerly looked after by artizans of a superior class, who acquired them with the little savings they had of their own, or with the assistance of loans from investment companies".[20]

From the Royal Commission on Housing (1884-5) we get a picture of well marked and well understood gradations in types of working class housing in the city. Those living in one room only were "labourers and people of the poorer class";[21] at the upper end of the scale a "growing demand" was reported for self-contained flats, built in two storeys with outside stairs and thus separate street doors.[22] Housing of this type had been erected by the Co-operative Building Company; founded at the end of the masons' nine hours strike in 1861, it catered, according to its manager, for the "better class of working man".[23] The President of Edinburgh Trades Council reported a "general desire among our artizans to be laird of their own house, as the saying is".[24] The trend to owner occupation no doubt involved only a minority, even of the "superior" artisans; most manual workers of all occupational groups continued to live in rented flats of the tenement style. But among these there was a wide range, from district to district, street to street,

19 For instances in other cities, see: C. M. Allan, "The Genesis of British Urban Re-development with special reference to Glasgow", EcHR, 2nd. ser., 18, 1965; Best, op.cit., pp.60-1; Stedman Jones, op.cit., pp.160-78.

20 R.C. on the Housing of the Working Classes (Scotland), PP 1884-5 XXXI, Q 18738 (Clerk to the City Improvement Trustees).

21 Ibid., Q. 19250 (President of Edinburgh Trades Council).

22 Ibid., Q. 18688 (City Valuator and Assessor). 23 Ibid., Q. 19071.

24 Ibid., Q. 19185.

even block to block or stair to stair. "Improved" blocks might thus be found interspersed among dwellings of a distinctly poor class.

Some statistical evidence, for the families surveyed by the C.O.S. in 1904, is given in Table 5.1. Thirty one per cent of the semi and unskilled, but only 14 per cent of the skilled were reported as living in one room; conversely, 40 per cent of the skilled, but only 20 per cent of the semi and unskilled were reported as paying 3s. 6d. or more weekly rent.

Table 5.1.
Housing of Families Studied by Charity Organisation Society, 1904: by Occupation of Head of Household

	N (households).	Mean Weekly Rent (shillings)	Per cent with: Rent 3s. 6d. or more.	Three or more rooms	One room.
Engineers	9	3.78	66	55	11
Joiners	10	3.70	66	50	20
Printers	30	3.53	60	27	3
Shoemakers	17	3.38	43	35	0
Bookbinders	9	3.30	44	11	11
Misc. skilled	17	3.19	41	18	12
Painters	31	2.95	22	19	23
Masons	14	2.90	15	36	21
Metal trades	18	2.76	22	28	22
Skilled Total	155	3.22	40	28	14
Semi and unskilled	26	2.69	20	15	31
Total	181	3.15	38	27	16

A difficulty is posed by the regrettably small numbers in some of the occupations. In view of this, we should avoid reading too much into the size of percentage differences - for example,

25 It is largely because of the difficulties of measurement presented by this tendency that no attempt has been made to measure residential segregation from census schedules.

the three per cent of printers and 11 per cent of engineers in one room both represent just one household, but out of 30 and nine respectively - but focus instead on the direction of differences, similarities in the distribution of different variables, and the rank order of occupations. The important point to emerge from this approach is that the differences are broadly consistent with my occupational analysis of economic conditions. Thus the printers, joiners and engineers have 60 per cent and more in the "high rent" group. This suggests, then, that differences in housing marked off a "superior" stratum of skilled workers, drawn from certain favoured trades, and from the best placed workers in other trades.

How, then, do the gradations in housing and neighbourhood relate to the spread of particular attitudes? What were the meanings to working people of movement to a different sort of housing? A good deal of caution is necessary here. The written evidence is hard to interpret, since it doubtless relates to a minority of exceptional, articulate working men, or to comment by journalists, philanthropists, and other interested observers. It must therefore be emphasised that my intention is not to argue that cultural factors were a cause of the emergence of new housing patterns, independent of demographic and economic variables, but rather to show that residential segregation, whatever its causes, had a cultural meaning, at any rate for the tiny minority of artisans who have left some documentary record of their personal views. Given this vital qualification, it is possible to delineate certain attitudes and aspirations which, significantly, had begun to emerge before the slum clearances of the 60's, so that the construction of improved dwellings at higher rents in place of the

slums helped meet a pre-existing demand for better housing. And this demand did not simply reflect a desire to spend improved incomes on improved housing; it was associated with particular values and ways of perceiving the urban neighbourhood and its inhabitants. A common theme is the desire to escape identification with the inhabitants of the old central working class area. A typical comment is that of the "Old Journeyman Hatter" in his published reminiscences: "In a moral point of view these localities will never contain a well conditioned population."[26] The winner of Dr. Begg's essay prize on "The Working Man's Home" (a compositor by trade) complained of the difficulty of maintaining "respectable" standards in the old tenements, with their social mixture, gregarious street (or court or close) life and lack of privacy.[27] The proprietor of one superior block, who had managed to let only 12 out of 50 flats, attributed this to a stigmatisation effect from the low reputation of the neighbourhood.[28] The North Briton - a local radical paper with a working class orientation - advocated the provision of running water in dwellings, on the ground that: "It is grievous to find a decent woman, perhaps in feeble health, standing at a public well for an hour, waiting for a supply of water - perhaps in the midst of prostitutes and viragos."[29]

Aspirations with regard to housing conditions and the urban neighbourhood thus reflect cultural divisions between strata of the working class. The movement to better housing was also an

[26] N.B., 27 April, 1861. [27] Symington, in Begg, op.cit., p.162.
[28] R.C. on Housing, op.cit., Q. 19154 (J. R. Findlay).
[29] N.B., 25 May, 1859.

escape from the stigma of association with the poorer section of the population (often this must have been reinforced by racial and religious prejudice against the Irish population). Asked whether the slum dwellers resented their poor conditions, A. C. Telfer, the President of the Trades Council (a joiner by trade) told the Royal Commission on Housing: "Properly speaking it is generally the Irish element, labourers and what not who live in that locality, and I must confess that I do not come into communication with them as a rule, so as to feel as it were the touch of their inner feelings in that respect."[30]

This desire to escape the stigma of proximity to the "Irish element, labourers and what not" had a more positive counterpart, in the values of domesticity and the home. The Reverend Dr. Begg articulated these values from the standpoint of the Free Church social conscience:

> "Man must not only have a covering, but a HOME. It is upon the right ordering of these little kingdoms that the peace and social order of all the great kingdoms of the world depends."[31]

Like the stigmatisation of the disreputable poor this valuation of family life is an important feature of Victorian middle class ideology: like the social imagery of stigmatisation it found an echo in the "respectable" working class. Telfer complained to the Royal Commission that the cost of decent housing forced artisans to take lodgers, and that consequently "the home is not the home it ought to be."[32] The prize essayist even had reservations about any extra-familial leisure pursuits at all, on

[30] R.C. on Housing, op.cit., Q. 19273. [31] Begg, op.cit., p.iv.

[32] R.C. on Housing, op.cit., Q. 19198.

the ground that they "must draw the head of the household away from his family at the time when he is most required, and give him a taste for engagements and companionships which can only be gratified beyond the pale of the domestic hearth."[33] The author is not referring, as one might imagine, to brothels, nor even to pubs - but to reading rooms! No doubt this is an extreme statement of the values of domesticity; those groups most likely to have high aspirations with regard to housing were also, as we shall see, characterised by high levels of participation in various voluntary organisations. But there seems equally little doubt that, in milder forms, the positive evaluation of home and family life was quite widely diffused.

There is, then, a certain amount of evidence to support the hypothesis that residential patterns were related to particular kinds of value and aspiration, and to marked cultural divisions within the working class. Popular recreation, and participation in various voluntary organisations seem likewise to have been bound up with the projection of a sense of social superiority. Best has commented that in the 1850's and 60's we can detect the beginnings of "the leisure patterns of modern industrial urban mass society."[34] The specialised organisations emerging in place of older ways of spending free time tended, however, to take the form of voluntary organisations, rather than of the business investment in leisure facilities more often associated with "mass society". The newer leisure organisations provided in the first instance, not for an undifferentiated "mass", but for more clearly identified social

[33] Symington, in Begg, op.cit., p.178.

[34] Best, op.cit., p.199.

groups. Social identities were, indeed, partly created through the construction of particular styles of life, as the "superior" artisan sought to distinguish himself from the rest of the working class.

The new leisure patterns are associated with a rejection of certain aspects of the older popular culture, especially its drinking customs. This is reflected in "those evening entertainments called soirées so common among the sub-middle and working classes of society."[35] The entertainment on such occasions was generally an eclectic mixture of popular songs (sentimental and humourous), recitations (Burns being a great favourite), humourous sketches, perhaps some painless adult education, and so on, together with (non-alcoholic) refreshments. Above all, there was nothing of a risqué character, for one feature of the soirée was that wives and "sweethearts" could safely be invited. I will cite just one example of the soirée: a gathering of "upwards of a thousand" printers and their womenfolk, at the invitation of William Nelson, the publisher, to hear a lecture on the "noble art" of printing and then "enjoy the humour and pathos of some of Scotland's choicest national songs, including Burns's proud protest, which could there be appreciated without any thought of social wrong - 'A man's a man for a' that'".[36] The Typographical Circular, a journal owned by the union, struck the note of working class respectability in its comment on the occasion: "Here were a thousand men, nearly all in superfine black

[35] J. S. Blackie, Notes of a Life, ed. by A. S. Walker, Edin. 1908, p.228.

[36] Wilson, op.cit., p.82.

coats and spotless shirt-fronts; a thousand women in tasteful dresses and bonnets of the latest mode ...; and in all this great mass of the 'lower orders' not a word out of joint; not a gesture of impatience; no crowding, jostling, ...; nothing but courtesy and ... perfect good breeding".[37] The soirée was likewise the stock in trade of the Workingmen's Club and Institute, formed in 1864 to provide "healthy recreation combined with mental improvement";[38] of benevolent employers (like Nelson); trade unions; or any body desirous of holding a respectable social gathering.

The content of the cultural programme on such occasions is of some relevance to my theme. To assess the quality of that culture is a difficult, and possibly dangerous enterprise. One must nonetheless note a sense of its eclectic and undemanding character. It is in some respects a watered down version of the literature and art of the middle class, adapted for lower middle and upper working class audiences, diffused as the badge of "respectability" and "self improvement". There are perhaps some more authentically popular elements: recitations and humourous sketches in broad Scots were favourite items on any programme. Even the desire for the trappings of the established culture might be inspired by egalitarian values, a stress on the independence and human dignity of the worker, and his needs as a "whole man". The acquisition of visible signs of refinement reflected the working man's demand for access to a cultural life from which he had hitherto felt shut out. As Smiles (whose

[37] Quoted by Wilson, loc.cit.

[38] S.T.C., Oct., 1864, according to which the committee were "principally printers".

writing affords one point of approach to the problem) argued: "The chief disadvantage attached to the calling of the laborious classes is, not that they are employed in physical work, but that they are too exclusively so employed, often to the neglect of their moral and intellectural faculties."[39] We find the same stress on the cultural needs of the "whole man" in Lord Gifford's address at the prize-giving of the Edinburgh Working-man's Flower Show:

> "He had very great pleasure in taking part in the proceedings of that day, for he had sometimes thought and felt that some of their practical philanthropic movements were just perhaps a little too narrow and restricted in their influence. (Hear, hear). It was quite right and necessary that the wants of the body should be supplied. ... But they seemed to forget that they had implanted in them by Him who made them tastes and aesthetic faculties which, if cultivated a little, would produce the highest, purest, and most elevating pleasure, and which served as a shield to protect their whole nature from what would otherwise defile it. (Applause)".[40]

In interpreting this syndrome of cultural aspriation one is confronted, as so often in the analysis of Victorian attitudes, with the ambiguous nature of "respectability". On one hand, "it entailed a healthy self-respect, an assertion of personal worth over external condition"; but on the other hand, it tended to be defined in practice by "precisely that acquisition of external characteristics" condemned by Burns.[41] The ambiguity is nicely

[39] S. Smiles, Self Help, London, 1968, Sphere Books edition, p.206.

[40] Ref., 13 Aug., 1870.

[41] F. Reid, "Keir Hardie's Conversion to Socialism", in A. Briggs and J. Saville (eds.), Essays in Labour History, 1886-1923, London, 1971, p.22.

brought out by the Edinburgh printers, assembling in their "superfine black coats", to hear declaimed from the platform:

"The man o' independent mind,

"He looks and laughs at a' that."

The social identity of the "respectable" working man was thus created through a commitment to sobriety and propriety and consequent rejection of traditional drinking habits, and of that demi-monde which continued to attract "a curious throng, ... a kind of hybrid, between the gent and the pickpocket".[42] More positively, the growth of those voluntary associations favoured by skilled workers was linked to their claim to be brought within the pale of civic respectability. (This claim, of course, played a part in the Reform agitation of 1866-67). Those associations connected with thrift - Co-ops, Savings Banks, and so on - are a familiar theme of the social comment literature of the period: the emergence of certain kinds of organised leisure pursuit can, I would argue, be viewed in a similar light.

The best example of this is perhaps the Volunteer movement.[43] The initial conception was a force of "men of the classes having means of their own".[44] But there was a remarkable response from skilled workers, demonstrating, one prominent Volunteer wrote, "even a higher public spirit than the professional Volunteers".[45]

[42] N.B. 30 April, 1862: see also, D. A. Jamieson, Powderhall and Pedestriansim, Edin., 1943, p.13.

[43] Dr. H. Cunningham, who is currently working on a book on the Volunteers, made many helpful comments and suggestions, on which I have drawn in the following discussion.

[44] J. H. A. MacDonald, Fifty Years of It: the experiences and struggles of a Volunteer of 1859, Edin., 1909, p.3.

[45] Ibid., p.24.

Two artisan companies were among the eight companies originally raised in the city in 1859 (the others being occupational companies catering for the university, accountants, lawyers, etc.), and were said to be "the first genuine artisan companies in the kingdom".[46] By 1868 there were eight artisan companies, whose 712 men together made up 37 per cent of the effective strength of the Edinburgh Rifle Volunteer Brigade; seven companies based on middle class occupations; and seven Highland companies (two of these were said to consist mainly of artisans).[47]

The artisans proved, moreover, to be the most consistent supporters of the movement; the business and professional elements tended to drop away when the war scare had passed, and "if it had not been for the zeal and energy of the working classes the Volunteer Force might have dwindled".[48] This picture is borne out by an analysis of membership figures (in view of special factors affecting the Highland companies, these are excluded from the discussion). Whereas the other companies reach their peak of effective strength in the international crises of 1870-1 and 1877-9, the artisan companies are not affected by these events, and their proportion of the total strength of the force consequently falls from 51 per cent in 1870 to 46 per cent in 1871.[49]

[46] W. Stephen, History of the Queen's City of Edinburgh Rifle Volunteer Brigade, Edin., 1881, p.61.

[47] Based on information about the various companies in Stephen, op.cit., passim.

[48] Macdonald, op.cit., p.92.

[49] Calculated from membership figures in Stephen, op.cit. Highland companies were excluded because of the special effects on recruitment of the clan associations, to which many Highlanders resident in the city belonged (Stephen, p.336). The proportion of affective strength in artisan companies did not recover after the Franco-Prussian war (perhaps because of the slump of the later 1870's), while middle class recruitment rose again with the Balkan crisis: the figures do not, however, cover a long enough time span to establish fully the effect of slumps or other factors on artisan participation.

It seems reasonable to infer from this difference in recruitment patterns the distinctive nature of the skilled workers' attachment to the movement.

A part of the meaning of Volunteering certainly lay in the embodiment of values of patriotism and citizenship - values perhaps reinforced by the occasional Garibaldian overtones of the movement. It also had a relation to the growing enthusiasm for "healthy" recreation.

> "The youths are enthusiastically in favour of it - some chance now of drill, or cricket or outdoor play in general after 'supper' ... short space is wanted to bring the whole trade within the social pale ... to allow the husband and father to have the fellowship with his family heretofore denied him - to enable the young to share the advantages of bodily recreation and culture enjoyed by the great bulk of the artisan class - to give the employers full return of nerve or brain force for which they pay at a uniform rate throughout the day; and, in short, to allow printers as a class to live, and move, and have their being like other rational people."[50]

Thus the Typographical Circular, greeting the shorter hours gained in 1868. Swimming, golf, walking, excursions and seaside holidays, cricket, football were all growing pastimes in this period.[51] Above all, football. Like the other sports mentioned this seems at first to have been based on voluntary organisations (whether

[50] S.T.C., May, 1868.

[51] See, A. G. Docherty, "Urban Working Class Recreation Before 1914", (unpublished undergraduate dissertation, Edinburgh University, Department of Economic History) for a valuable survey of recreational facilities in Edinburgh.

self-governing or under religious or other sponsorship). Football was thus initially part of the pattern of "healthy recreation", distinguishing the respectable skilled worker with the ability and inclination to participate in voluntary organisations. The later development of football into a "mass" spectator sport is discussed below, in the context of late nineteenth century changes in popular leisure; the main focus at present is on the existence of cultural differences within the working class, rather than on their possible erosion by late nineteenth century developments.

That such differences anyway continued to be important is indicated by table 5.2. This is based on the "comments" on each family by the C.O.S. "lady visitors" who conducted the investigation. It seemed best to treat these comments as a measure of the perception of working class families in different occupational and other circumstances by middle class observers (the connection of this perception with a stereotype of the "respectable" worker is discussed in chapter 7, below). We are therefore concerned with the saliency of the activities mentioned in the middle class investigators' perception or recollection of the various families. The pattern of variation is, interestingly, similar to that in housing conditions (as is indicated by repeating figures for mean rent from table 5.1). The semi and unskilled sample fall below the figure for all skilled occupations combined, on all three categories of activity; the printers, bookbinders, engineers and miscellaneous skilled are above that figure on at least two out of three; and the painters and masons are below on all three. That there is an association

between housing conditions and reported participation is borne out by analysis at the level of the individual families. Taking all occupations together, 64 per cent of families paying 3s. 6d. or more, but only 41 per cent of those in the lowest rent bracket (2s. 11d. or less) are recorded as participants in one or more type of activity. Living in the higher rent houses, and being perceived as participants in the various activities are both part of a style of life, distinguishing in cultural terms the different strata of the working class.

Table 5.2.
Organisational and Leisure Affiliations of Families Studied by C.O.S., 1904

	N*	Mean Rent	Per cent recorded as participants in: Savings Institution	Religious, Temperance, etc.	Voluntary Orgs. Sports and Hobbies.
Engineers	9	3.78	33	78	11
Joiners	11 *	3.70	27	18	18
Printers	30	3.53	33	20	20
Shoemakers	18 *	3.38	17	28	22
Bookbinders	9	3.30	55	33	22
Misc.skilled	17	3.19	35	41	18
Painters	33 *	2.95	18	27	9
Masons	14	2.90	21	7	7
Metal Trades	18	2.76	33	22	17
Skilled Total	159 *	3.22	28	28	16
Semi and unskilled	27 *	2.69	18	22	11
Total	186 *	3.15	27	27	15

* Discrepancies due to inclusion here of families in furnished lodgings omitted from table 5.1.

Notes

Savings Institution. Savings Banks, Friendly Societies, Co-op, Thrift Clubs, etc: not trade unions.

Religious, Temperance, etc. All activities and facilities under religious or temperance auspices, as well as membership of Churches, temperance organisations, Salvation Army, etc.

Other Voluntary Organisations, Sports and Hobbies. Participation in any other sort of vol. org. (working men's club, political parties, etc.) or any specific type of recreation, inside or outside the home: reported attendance at meetings, office-beering, etc. in Friendly Societies is counted here, but simple membership of Friendly Societies is counted only under "Savings".

Participation by any family member in these activities is counted: but no family is counted more than once for the same category of activity.

Further evidence of the differentiation in leisure activities is provided by the social composition of four voluntary organisations (table 5.3). It should be emphasised that these organisations cannot be claimed to be a representative cross-section of popular leisure in the city. Moreover the nature of the four activities - their demands on money, time and other resources - perhaps contains a built-in bias to the more prosperous sections of the working class. (It should, however, be noted that many of the classes in the Flower Show were for window boxes, indoor plants, etc., and some were specifically for dwellers in central tenement areas). Activities of a less demanding and less formally organised kind - of which no records survive - may well have involved a greater degree of social contact between working class strata. The figures in table 5.3 are, nonetheless, the only ones found for voluntary organisation membership; and their interest anyway relates partly to the contacts they reveal between the - admittedly "superior" - artisan membership and non-manual groups.

The skilled manual category accounts for a majority of the Golf Club and Flower Show, and for the largest single category among the Mechanics' Library committeemen. The Bowling Club committees, on the other hand, have a preponderance of middle class groups.[52] Semi and unskilled workers are clearly under-represented in the Library and Flower Show, while they do not appear at all in the other two organisations.[53] And the occupational breakdown of the skilled manual category shows a concentration of occupations which we might expect, from other evidence, to find represented in the "superior" stratum: printers are by far the largest group in the Library, with seven out of the 15 skilled workers, while bookbinders, engineers and brassfounders have two each; printers and furniture trades are the largest occupations in the Golf Club; masons, joiners, smiths and shoemakers in the Flower Show.[54] It is also worth noting the concentration of transport workers among the few semi and unskilled workers belonging to these organisations. The one Library officer in this category was a carter; railwaymen account for two of the semi and unskilled Flower Show prizewinners, road transport for another two, while the remaining one was a post office worker. Transport workers thus appear to be distinguished from other semi and unskilled occupations by somewhat more contact with the artisan social world.

[52] It may, of course, be misleading to compare committee composition with total membership composition, but the only available membership details for an individual Bowling Club show a similar pattern, with only one skilled worker among 18 new members: Minutes of Edinburgh Bowling Club, 1890-1.

[53] If all the untraceable cases (other than six households headed by widows, etc. among the Flower Show prizewinners) were in fact semi and unskilled workers, the relevant per centages would be:

	Golf Club	Flower Show	Bowling Clubs
Skilled	51	47	4
Unskilled	17	26	22

[54] Unlike the other trades mentioned, the shoemakers did not enjoy an advantageous economic position. On the other hand, they were by f the most numerous of the skilled trades at this period.

As well as differences between activities favoured by various social strata we sometimes also find differences in the social composition of organisations catering for the same activity. Thus certain golf clubs drew their membership from professional and superior business groups, in contrast to the artisan and white collar membership of the Bruntsfield Links Allied Club.[55] Similarly, the university and professional-based Grange Cricket Club was clearly of a more exalted social tone than the cricket clubs playing on the Meadows, which on one occasion sought the aid of the Trades Council in preserving their ground.[56] The occupational distinction between different Volunteer companies exemplifies the same tendency.

This evidence suggests, then, that certain voluntary organisations in the city had a distinctively artisan character, combining high participation by skilled workers with low participation by less skilled groups of the working class and - as table 5.3 indicates - considerable participation by business and white collar groups. Business and the two white collar groups together account for an actual majority (53 per cent) of the Library committees, for 27 per cent of the Golf Club and for 23 per cent of the Flower Show. Taken together with the low unskilled manual participation in these organisations, this would seem to bear out the assertion of Hobsbawm and other writers that the social gulf above the "labour aristocrat" was narrower than that below him.[57]

55 T. S. Aitchison and G. Lorimer, Reminiscences of the Old Bruntsfield Links Golf Club, 1904, privately printed.

56 Reminiscences of the Grange Cricket Club, Edinburgh, Edin. 1891; T.C. Minutes, 9 Feb., 1886.

57 Hobsbawm, "Labour Aristocracy", op.cit., p.274.

Table 5.3.
Social Composition of Four Voluntary Organisations

	Per centage of:			
	Officers, Mechanics Library 1840-58	Members, Bruntsfield Links Allied Golf Club, 1869.	Prizewinners, Working Men's Flower Show 1870	Officers, Bowling Clubs 1890-2.
Professions	5	6	-	20
Business	15	12	14	28
White collar I	19	9	3	31
White collar II	19	6	6	3
Retail, warehouse	-	-	6	3
Manual - skilled	37	62 *	59	6
Manual - semi and unskilled	2	-	8	-
Manual - skill unclassifiable	2	3	1	-
Domestic service	-	-	3	-
Miscellaneous services	-	3	1	9
N traced (= 100%)	41	34	78	35
Not traced	-	7	25	10

Source — List of officers' names and occupations in Edin. Mechanics' Subscription Library, Laws and Catalogue, Edin., 1859; Tracing of names and addresses from census schedules: list of members, 1869, Minutes of Bruntsfield Links Allied Golf Club, 1869-80; list of prizewinners, Edin. Working Man's Flower Show, Ref. 13 Aug., 1870; officers of clubs affiliated to Associated Bowling Clubs of Edin. and Leith, in J. Prestell (ed.), Edinburgh Bowling Annuals, 1890-2. I am indebted to the Registrar General for Scotland for allowing me to consult census schedules.

Notes — For occupational classification see Appendix 1. No cases occurred in categories mentioned in Appendix 1 missing from the table. Women and children Flower Show prizewinners classified by occupation of household head (untraced cases include six households headed by widows, etc.). Families with more than one prize are counted only once, as are Library and Bowling Club officers serving for more than one year.

* Nine cases (5 printers, 3 furniture trades, 1 shoemaker) assigned by workplace address to appropriate skilled trade (3 cases with both workplace and home address were skilled workers). Skilled manual = 36% white collar (I and II) = 41% if cases with workplace address only are treated as white collar rather than skilled manual employees.

But to determine the social significance of this pattern it is necessary to examine more closely the nature of these non-manual strata. Business, in particular, is a heterogeneous category, ranging from large local employers, who belong most properly with the professions in the upper middle class, to self-employed shopkeepers and tradesmen of manual working class origins and affiliations.[58] To find reliable social indicators of these differences would entail a separate programme of research into the structure and life styles of the middle class; here, I can only draw attention to the strong probability that those businessmen with whom artisans came into social contact belonged predominantly to the small business sector. With regard to the white collar groups, more rigorous occupational distinctions can be drawn. Whereas my white collar I category - clerks, book-keepers, etc., more or less equivalent to Lockwood's Blackcoated Worker[59] - are the largest category in the Bowling Clubs, in the other organisations they are more evenly balanced by white collar II - comprising a wide range of teachers, minor officials, managerial, supervisory (above foreman level) and technical employees, and other miscellaneous non-manual employees distinguished by special skills or responsibilities. That the distinction between these two white collar groups is worth making, is suggested by the fact that the preponderance of white collar I (clerks, etc.) in the Bowling Club is combined with high proportions in the professional and business categories, and only one case (= three per cent) in white collar II. Although the difference in date between the sets of figures - and the likely changes in occupational structure be-

[58] Problems of classification are discussed further in Appendix 1, qv. Some men assigned to the skilled manual category may in fact belong to the group of self-employed or small master craftsmen

[59] D. Lockwood, The Blackcoated Worker, London, 1958.

tween those dates - dictate great caution in drawing inferences, this pattern does suggest that the "blackcoated workers" in white collar I justify their reputation for "status climbing", by their assocation on the Bowling Club committees with professional and business groups; whereas the more heterogeneous white collar II category have a higher level of participation in those organisations with a large artisan membership.

I would therefore argue that skilled workers' social contacts with non-manual strata were mainly with a relatively unformed, fluid and transitional lower middle class of small businessmen, managerial and supervisory grades, etc. As the introduction to the Mechanics' Library Catalogue commented: "it may be confidently affirmed, that during the whole of its history the great proportion of those who have directed its movements have either been mechanics, or very slightly raised above them in the social scale."[60] In the light of this comment, the list of non-manual occupations among the Library officers may be taken as a guide to the composition of the strata considered to occupy this position in "the social scale".[61] Apart from two professional men (a doctor and a solicitor), the officers include a clothier, a cheesemonger, a house agent, a corn merchant, a spirit merchant, a bookseller, eight clerks, etc., four teachers, two reporters, a surveyor and a collector.[62] This range of occupations was probably often recruited from skilled workers, or their children.

60 Edinburgh Mechanics' Subscription Library, Laws and Catalogue, Edin., 1859, 6th. edition, p.v.

61 The list of officers in the Catalogue covers every year since the Library was founded in 1825: here, as in table 5.3, I have extrapolated the officers for 1840 and after.

62 Membership of a library no doubt had vocational advantages for some of these men, especially the teachers.

With regard to elementary school teachers, the official regulation of the recruitment, training, salaries and general social behaviour of the teacher in grant-aided schools provides some documentation for this. It was generally assumed that pupil teachers were recruited from the children of "respectable" skilled workers, and the framers of educational policy appear to have designed a niche for the qualified teacher slightly above the level of the "superior" artisan.[63]

The leisure activities of some artisans therefore brought them into contact with certain lower middle class groups; this is, moreover, in striking contrast to the paucity of contacts with less skilled groups of manual workers. But in stressing the "shading over of the aristocracy of labour into other strata"[64] there is a danger of missing the other side of the coin; one should perhaps equally stress the marginal position of these non-manual groups, vis a vis the remainder of the middle class. Rather than the familiar "ladder" image of the social order - with small businessmen, teachers and white collar employees spread over the rungs above the upper working class and below the larger businessmen, professions, etc. - it may be more appropriate to think of culturally differentiated social worlds within the setting

63 See R. Johnson, "Educational Policy and Social Control in Early Victorian England", Past and Present 49, 1970, pp.113-5; G. Sutherland, Elementary Education in the Nineteenth Century, London, 1971, Historical Association pamphlet; and cf. Hobsbawm, loc.cit. Despite the important national difference in educational tradition, elementary education in large cities, and the workings of the pupil teacher system seem to have paralleled the English developments analysed in the works cited. For Scotland, see J. Scotland, The History of Scottish Education, vol. I, London, 1969, pt.III. But cf N. Ball, Her Majesty's Inspectorate, Birmingham, 1963, p.170 for the higher social standing of Scottish teachers; Scotland, op.cit., p.309 suggests that this traditionally high standing was not shared by college-trained elementary school teachers (who were recruited from the pupil teachers).

64 Hobsbawm, loc.cit.

of the Victorian city. In this perspective, certain lower middle class strata inhabit the fringes of a social world dominated by the "superior" artisan.[65]

Occupational data from marriage certificates throw further light on patterns of contact between different social strata. Table 5.4 is based on the marriage certificates for all grooms in selected skilled trades and in two unskilled occupations (building labourers and carters) marrying in the Registration District of Edinburgh during 1865-9.[66] In all the skilled trades but one (the ironmoulders) a third or more married the daughters of other skilled workers; similarly, the daughters of semi and unskilled workers account for the largest single category of the brides of building labourers and carters. The carters, however, have a rather larger proportion in the skilled manual category, which bears out the impression, from voluntary organisation membership, that transport workers had rather more contact than other unskilled workers with the social world of the artisan. The figures for the business and white collar categories combined are more than double those for both unskilled occupations, in every skilled trade except the brassfinishers. One further general point must be made about the figures: the occupations with the higher proportions marrying the daughters of agricultural workers,

[65] There were, however, certain critically important formal and informal links between this social world and that of the locally dominant strata of the middle class, for an analysis of which see ch.7 below.

[66] I am indebted to the Registrar General for Scotland and his staff for allowing me to consult the certificates, and to Mr. P. Morse for help with the computing work involved in their analysis. Strictly speaking the data reflect marriages solemnised in the city, rather than men or women resident there; this may contribute to the figures for "rural" groups, discussed below.

farmers or crofters - the masons, joiners, engineers and the two unskilled occupations - are, on the whole, those in which we would expect to find considerable numbers of migrants from rural areas (including Ireland and Highland Scotland).[67] These figures suggest that migration was an important source of cultural differentiation in the urban working class at this period; for it would seem that men in occupations recruited from rural areas maintained contacts, either with other people of rural origin, or possibly with people still resident in their place of origin. And this is true, not only of unskilled labourers of Irish descent, but also of such skilled trades as the masons and joiners.[68]

[67] The "agriculture, fishing, seaman" category consists overwhelmingly of agricultural workers, a further breakdown making little difference to the overall picture. For the rural origins of carters see A. Tuckett, The Scottish Carter, London, 1967, pp.22-3. The figures for the building labourers probably reflect the influence of Irish immigration; whereas the carters had a higher propensity to marry the daughters of farm workers, the building labourers married the daughters of farmers or crofters.

[68] It is worth noting that the two "rural" groups of farm workers and farmers and crofters are fairly evenly balanced in these trades. This may reflect their contact with a rather higher stratum of Lowland rural society, and/or a high concentration of men of Highland origin, tending to marry the daughters of crofters.

Table 5.4.
Marriage: Distribution of Brides' Fathers of Grooms in Selected Occupations, 1865-9

	N (Grooms)	Per cent Marrying Daughters of:- Professions	Business	White collar I	White collar II	Retail, warehouse	Manual - skilled	Manual - semi and unskilled	Manual - skill unclassifiable	Domestic service	Miscellaneous services	Police	Armed forces	Agriculture, fishing, seaman	Farmer, crofter	Other, miscellaneous	Summary Business/white collar **	Manual - skilled	Manual - semi and unskilled	Rural ++
Printer *	135	1.5	13.3	0.7	3.7	2.2	54.8	7.4	3.7	3.7	1.5	-	0.7	3.7	3.0	-	17.7	54.8	7.4	6.7
Bookbinder	31	-	9.7	-	9.7	-	58.1	3.2	9.7	3.2	-	-	-	-	6.5	-	19.4	58.1	3.2	6.5
Mason	188	-	9.0	1.1	4.8	-	37.8	14.4	4.8	5.9	-	-	-	10.6	11.7	-	14.9	37.8	14.4	22.3
Joiner	216	0.5	15.3	1.9	4.6	0.5	36.6	8.8	4.2	8.3	-	-	1.9	8.3	9.3	-	21.8	36.6	8.8	17.6
Painter	77	5.2	9.1	-	7.8	-	37.7	20.8	5.2	2.6	2.6	-	1.3	6.5	1.3	-	16.9	37.7	20.8	7.8
Engineer +	100	-	10.0	1.0	3.0	1.0	48.0	13.0	2.0	6.0	-	-	-	13.0	3.0	-	14.0	48.0	13.0	16.0
Ironmoulder	23	-	21.7	-	8.7	-	30.4	21.7	8.7	-	-	-	-	4.3	4.3	-	30.4	30.4	21.7	8.6
Brassfinisher	39	-	5.1	-	-	5.1	61.5	7.7	5.1	7.7	-	2.6	-	5.1	-	-	5.1	61.5	7.7	5.1
Shoemaker	116	1.7	9.5	-	0.9	2.6	47.4	12.9	4.3	6.0	-	0.9	-	4.3	6.9	2.6	10.4	47.4	12.9	11.2
Building Labourer ø	114	-	2.6	-	1.8	-	13.2	51.8	2.6	7.0	-	-	0.9	5.3	13.2	1.8	4.4	13.2	51.8	18.5
Carter	81	-	1.2	-	2.5	1.2	28.4	38.3	2.5	2.5	1.2	-	1.2	14.8	4.9	1.2	3.7	28.4	38.3	19.7

Notes

See Appendix 1 for occupational classification.

* All grooms described as "compositor", "press and machineman", "printer".
\+ All described as "engineer", "fitter", "turner".
ø Building labourers in all trades.
** Business, white collar I, white collar II combined.

Some other differences among the skilled trades are, however, less easily explained. Although the high proportion of painters marrying the daughters of semi and unskilled workers was predicted from their economic condition, the ironmoulders have a still higher proportion, while the shoemakers, despite their precarious economic position, do not have an unusually large proportion of unskilled brides' fathers.[69] These figures become less "anomalous", in the light of the more detailed occupational composition of the unskilled brides' fathers. While painter grooms have an unusually high proportion of building labourer brides' fathers, the semi and unskilled brides' fathers of ironmoulders are accounted for by high proportions of carters and miners, and the shoemaker grooms have the highest proportion among the skilled trades of marriages to the daughters of men described simply as "labourer".[70] Whereas the ironmoulders marry differentially the daughters of carters and miners, the painters marry differentially the daughters of building labourers; variations in the occupational composition of unskilled brides' fathers, as well as in their overall proportion, can thus be related to the differences in the class situation of the various skilled trades. An occupational breakdown of the brides' fathers of building labourer and carter grooms throws a similar light on the differences between unskilled occupations. Whereas the skilled brides' fathers of building labourers

[69] The figure for ironmoulders may be partly an effect of small fluctuations on the rather small total of cases for this trade. It should also be noted that the shoemakers have the second smallest total in business and the two whitecollar groups combined - the smallest being for the brassfinishers, another trade with a small total of cases.

[70] This, and subsequent references to specific occupations of brides' fathers concerns only occupations each accounting for at least one per cent (= 9 cases) of the brides' fathers for all skilled grooms combined. The miners' skill grade is something of a borderline case; and they were in any case resident outside the city.

are confined to the building trades and to three other large skilled occupations (smiths, shoemakers and tailors), those of carters include a wider range.[71] Of unskilled occupations, 22 per cent of building labourers, compared to one per cent of carters, married the daughters of building labourers; no building labourers, compared to 15 per cent of carters married the daughters of carters; and 26 per cent of building labourers, compared to 11 per cent of carters, married the daughters of general labourers.[72] These differences are of considerable interest, in the light of the finding that transport workers largely account for the unskilled participation, such as it was, in voluntary organisations with a high artisan membership.

The evidence of participation in voluntary organisations and marriage therefore points to the existence of considerable social segregation within the manual working class of the 1850's to 70's, and to associated differences in the degree of mixing with non-manual strata. And - as has been noted at several points in the discussion - the trades distinguished by superior housing standards, high levels of participation in voluntary organisations and, to a lesser extent, by distinctive patterns of marriage are, broadly speaking, those which we would expect, from variations in economic situation, to find forming an upper stratum of the working class. But it would be misleading to postulate any simple, one-for-one correlation, implying a mechanistic economic determinism. It is fairly clear that there were independent sources of variation in styles of life and patterns of aspiration, related partly to the

[71] This statement refers to the existence of <u>any</u> marriages at all to daughters of the skilled trades mentioned, not to differential tendencies of inter-marriage.

[72] That is, "labourers", not otherwise described.

traditions, expectations and value systems inculcated by particular occupational cultures. The high participation of printers in voluntary organisations, taken together with the somewhat insecure economic position of compositors suggests the importance of this factor.[73] And the shoemakers, unlike the painters, are not distinguished by an especially high rate of marriage to the daughters of unskilled workers, although the economic position of the two trades was fairly comparable.

It is thus important to bear in mind the complexity of the link between class situation and the life style of the "superior" artisan. The values of the upper stratum exerted a wider influence, as less favoured groups of artisans - and even some groups of less skilled workers - sought to emulate its behaviour patterns, within the limits set by economic circumstances. The Edinburgh News gives a vivid picture of the vestiges of the life styles of the "educated working man" in the home of a decayed craftsman (a painter): despite his dilapidated surroundings this man still owned a treatise on Helvetius, and his conversation is described as highly cultured.[74] The analysis of occupational differences in culture and life style has therefore to be of a probablistic type: men in such "superior" trades as the joiners and engineers were more likely to manifest the patterns of behaviour in residence, leisure and inter-marriage which I have labelled as those of working class "respectability". This is really the most that can safely be said, in the absence of data enabling us to

[73] The machinemen, of course, had a stronger economic position; unfortunately the frequent use in source material of the blanket term "printer" makes it impossible rigorously to distinguish the two trades. It is, however, most unlikely that the machinemen would account for all the printers' participation in voluntary organisations. The columns of the Typographical Circular in any case give ample evidence of the high cultural aspirations of compositors.

[74] Edin. News, 27 Nov., 1852.

correlate class situation and cultural patterns at an individual level; one can merely point to the emergence of certain trends of social demarcation in the urban community, and to their likely connection with the structural differentiation in class situation.[75] Given this vital qualification, we can conclude that the working class of the mid-decades of the century was marked by very wide cultural differences, and that these differences have some discernible connection with the formation of a socially distinct upper artisan stratum.

It remains, in this chapter, to ask whether this cultural pattern underwent any change during the last two decades of the century. These decades saw important changes in trade unionism and labour politics, and it may well be that the origins of these changes must be sought in the urban community, as well as in the more often discussed economic and industrial changes of the period.[76] That marked differences in life styles - at least as perceived by middle class observers - remained important, has already been noted from table 5.2. But there are signs of a shift towards the turn of the century, away from the exclusiveness of the "superior" artisan towards more broadly based and open kinds of extra-work social activity.

In the first place, although money wage differentials did not narrow and possibly widened in the 1880's and 90's, the fall in food prices and improvement to real wages may well have given some unskilled workers, and the less favoured sections of skilled labour access to goods and services hitherto reserved to the "superior" artisan. Changes in occupational structure may also have been important. Transport was one of the fastest growing sectors of employ-

[75] Historical research is inevitably prone to the "ecological fallacy"; this is, however, the necessary price of much knowledge about the past.

[76] The trade union and political developments in question are analysed in ch.9, below.

ment: the number of rail servants rose from 368 in 1861 to 1051 in 1901, and carters increased from 698 to 3090. This trend may have had some social and cultural impact, in view of the higher degree of contact between transport workers and the artisan social world.

The strongest evidence for changes in leisure patterns is that relating to the development of football. The modern form of the game appears to have grown up in the 1860's, when it was one of those forms of "healthy recreation" which were part of the way of life of the "respectable" artisan. Football teams were often ancillary activities for such bodies as the Volunteers; the Third Edinburgh Rifle Volunteers are described as among "the pioneers of the game in the Scottish capital".[77] One veteran player recalled teetotal gatherings at Buchanan's Temperance Hotel at this early period - a clear enough indication of the place of football in the range of "respectable" leisure activities.[78] On the other hand, the association of some teams - in Edinburgh, Hibernian - with the community organisations of the Catholic Irish presumably brought with it some element of unskilled participation in the sport. By the later 1870's there was apparently some form of organised cup contest between the various teams in the city:

> "It is incontestable that the East Meadows was the first real nursery of the Association game in Edinburgh: the Heart of Midlothian and Hibernian clubs had their origin there, and they were still public parks' clubs when they met in the final round of the Edinburgh Football Association's Cup competition in the early spring of 1878."[79]

[77] W. Reid, The Story of the Hearts, Edin., n.d., c1924, p.12.
[78] "Twenty One Years Ago", Edinburgh Athletic Times, 23 Sept., 1895.
[79] Reid, op.cit., pp.14-5.

It is from this local cup final that the historian of Hearts dates widespread public interest in the game: although "the game itself made no appeal to him" a reporter who was present became convinced of its importance, "when he saw the members of the winning team run for their lives from the enraged followers of the Hibernians and witnessed the partial wreckage of a cab".[80] The development of football as a mass spectator sport, with the emergence of a few leading clubs, dates from the 1880's. By 1881 the Hearts had their own ground.[81] By the 1890's the pattern of organised championships, with a large spectator element, and a substructure of talent spotting, boys' clubs, etc. underpinning the main local teams, had emerged.[82]

There is little doubt that, whereas the artisan leisure pursuits of the third quarter of the century tended to separate various strata of the working class, the development of football as a mass spectator sport made for a more homogeneous urban working class culture.[83] Unlike, for example, those artisan pursuits included in table 5.3 - library membership, golf and gardening - soccer could be followed and played on fairly limited financial resources, and "does not call for great expense of time in which to enjoy oneself".[84] There is certainly a considerable volume of comment, from various points of view, on the widespread appeal of the game. According to the Typographical Circular (1894), football was "the favourite amusement of a large number of printers"; in the same year the "Scottish notes" in Justice commented sadly:

80 Ibid., pp.15-6. 81 Ibid., p.24

82 This is clear from the columns of the Edinburgh Athletic Times, which gave more coverage to football than to any other sport.

83 Cf. I.R. Taylor, "Soccer Consciousness and Soccer Hooliganism", in S. Cohen (ed.), Images of Deviance, Harmondsworth, 1971, pp. 141-3.

84 Edin. Athletic Times, 23 Sept., 1895.

> "Twas a cold, wet Saturday afternoon as he stood inside the barricade, he had not got his dinner, his feet were wet and he shivered all over. Where was this and who was he? This was a foot-ball match and he was a wage-slave enjoying his half holiday!"[85]

Some years later the complaint is echoed, but from rather different assumptions:

> "A very large number of employers complain of the lack of interest shown by the men and lads in their work, and say that football and sports absorb any intelligent attention they have to give. This complaint is by no means confined to the employers of unskilled labour, but is made also by master plumbers, builders, sawyers, plasterers and others."[86]

It is therefore arguable that, with the emergence of football as a mass spectator sport, popular leisure became less closely linked to a pattern of stratification within the working class; although it must be emphasised that cultural divisions were still very strong, they now co-existed with the common interest in football, shared by a wider range of working class groups.

The evidence of marriage certificates also suggests a greater degree of social homogeneiety. Table 5.5 gives the same information as table 5.4, for grooms marrying during the years 1895-7, and table 5.6 summarises the changes between the two periods. Many of the differences visible in the 1860's have diminished. Thus, the proportion marrying daughters of business and white collar groups shows a fall in some trades and only small increases in others, while it

[85] S.T.C., Jan., 1894; Justice, 31 March, 1894.

[86] Gordon, op.cit., p.2.

rises in both the unskilled occupations. The engineers, on the other hand, have a large increase in this category. Thus, there was a general narrowing of occupational differences, with increases in the proportion of unskilled men marrying daughters of the lower middle class groups and decreases or only small increases in the equivalent proportions for the skilled trades, but the engineers are a notable exception to this trend. Another trend suggesting greater social homogeneity is a decrease in the proportion marrying daughters of the "rural" groups, in those occupations with exceptionally high proportions at the earlier period. Along with the decline in the proportion of grooms marrying the daughters of non-manual and rural groups went a general increase in the proportion marrying the daughters of other manual workers. In most of the skilled trades the unskilled category shows an increase, while there is a considerable increase in the proportion of building labourers with brides' fathers in the skilled category, and a smaller one in the proportion of carters. Here again, the figures suggest a general trend toward greater social homogeneity. The detailed breakdown of the occupations of the manual brides' fathers confirms this impression. Nineteen percent of building labourers and five per cent of carters married the daughters of building labourers (compared to 22 per cent and one per cent in 1865-9), and six per cent of building labourers and seven per cent of carters married the daughters of carters (compared to none and 15 per cent in 1865-9).

Table 5.5.
Marriage: Distribution of Brides' Fathers of Grooms in Selected Occupations, 1895-7

N (Grooms)		Per cent Marrying Daughters of:- Professions	Business	White collar I	White collar II	Retail, warehouse	Manual - skilled	Manual - semi and unskilled	Manual - skill unclassifiable	Domestic Service	Miscellaneous services	Police	Armed forces	Agriculture, fishing, seaman	Farmer, crofter	Other Miscellaneous		Summary Business/white collar	Manual - skilled	Manual - semi and unskilled	Rural
Printer	127	-	9.4	3.9	3.1	1.6	54.3	10.2	3.9	7.1	-	-	0.8	3.1	2.4	-		16.4	54.3	10.2	5.5
Bookbinder	27	-	7.4	3.7	3.7	3.7	59.3	7.4	3.7	-	-	3.7	3.7	3.7	-	-		14.8	59.3	7.4	3.7
Mason	168	-	10.7	0.6	4.8	1.8	42.9	17.3	2.4	4.2	-	0.6	2.4	10.1	2.4	-		16.1	42.9	17.3	12.5
Joiner	178	-	8.4	5.6	5.6	1.1	38.2	12.4	5.1	7.3	0.6	-	0.6	6.2	9.0	-		19.6	38.2	12.4	15.2
Painter	82	-	2.4	2.4	-	1.2	51.2	22.0	2.4	3.7	1.2	1.2	2.4	4.9	4.9	-		4.8	51.2	22.0	9.8
Engineer	99	1.0	9.1	1.0	10.1	2.0	43.4	9.1	8.1	5.1	-	2.0	2.0	4.0	5.1	-		20.2	43.4	9.1	9.1
Ironmoulder	29	-	6.9	-	6.9	-	51.7	17.2	3.4	3.4	-	-	-	3.4	6.9	-		13.8	51.7	17.2	10.3
Brassfinisher	34	-	5.9	-	-	-	50.0	23.5	-	5.9	2.9	2.9	-	8.8	-	-		5.9	50.0	23.5	8.8
Shoemaker	64	1.6	3.1	1.6	6.2	1.6	53.1	12.5	4.7	1.6	-	-	1.6	4.7	7.8	-		10.9	53.1	12.5	12.5
Building labourer	108	-	1.9	0.9	2.8	-	28.7	51.9	2.8	0.9	-	-	-	4.6	5.6	-		5.6	28.7	51.9	10.2
Carter	127	-	1.6	3.1	3.1	2.4	31.5	37.8	3.9	6.3	-	-	-	5.5	4.7	-		7.8	31.5	37.8	10.2

Notes See Table 5.4.

Table 5.6.
Differences in Marriage Patterns, 1865-9 and 1895-7

	Difference in % of Brides' Fathers:			
	Business/ white collar.	Manual - skilled.	Manual - semi unskilled.	Rural
Printers	- 1.3	- 0.5	+ 2.8	- 1.2
Bookbinders	- 4.6	+ 1.2	+ 4.2	- 2.8
Masons	+ 1.2	+ 5.1	+ 2.9	- 9.8
Joiners	- 2.2	+ 1.6	+ 3.6	- 2.4
Painters	- 12.1	+ 13.5	+ 1.2	+ 2.0
Engineers	+ 6.2	- 4.6	- 3.9	- 6.9
Ironmoulders	- 16.6	+ 21.3	- 4.5	+ 1.7
Brassfinishers	+ 0.8	- 11.5	+ 15.8	+ 3.7
Shoemakers	+ 0.5	+ 5.7	- 0.4	+ 1.3
Building labourers	+ 1.2	+ 15.5	+ 0.1	- 8.3
Carters	+ 4.1	+ 3.1	- 0.5	- 9.5

Analysis of inter-marriage therefore confirms the impression of a weakening of social segregation and cultural distinctions within the working class. Whereas the earlier part of the period saw the emergence of a distinctive upper artisan stratum, its second half saw a blurring - albeit on a limited scale - of the distinctions between working class strata.

CHAPTER 6

OPPORTUNITIES AND ASPIRATIONS

i. Thrift

The life style of the "respectable artisan" involved a commitment to thrift, as well as to the residence and leisure patterns examined in the previous chapter. "Respectability", as Best has pointed out, was closely linked in the minds of the mid-Victorian generation to "independence" - reliance on one's own resources and the ability to make personal provision for oneself and one's dependents.[1] Any account of the culture of the artisan must therefore consider the extent to which he attempted to solve the pressing problems of economic survival by the individual exercise of thrift, restraint, economic prudence in personal and family decision-making.

There seems little doubt of the special appeal to the artisan stratum of a range of institutions catering for those who wished to save small amounts from limited incomes. Spokesmen for Friendly Society lodges in Edinburgh all gave the same picture to the Royal Commission of 1872; in the words of the Free Gardeners' secretary, the members were "generally speaking artizans".[2] Similarly, shareholders in the Cooperative Building Company consisted of "masons, joiners, plasterers, plumbers, printers, and every trade in Edinburgh"; and local mortgage companies catered mainly, though not exclusively, for working men.[3] The historian of St. Cuthbert's Cooperative Association - by far the most successful of several

[1] Best, op.cit., pp.257-60.

[2] R.C. on Friendly Societies, Second Report, Pt.ii, PP 1872 XXVI, Q.9655; and cf. Q 9877, 10032.

[3] Ibid., Q 9013,9073. The Building Co. was a dividend-paying investment for shareholders, building houses for sale on the general market; the purchasers were "principally working men" but not necessarily shareholders (Q 8949, 8974-5).

attempts at consumer cooperation in the city - traces its origin to the fact that: "The cabinet works of Messrs. J. & T. Scott almost adjoined the railway works, so that, at Haymarket alone, there was a large number of intelligent workmen to whom co-operation would naturally appeal." Founder members included three cabinetmakers, a wood turner, two blacksmiths, an engine-driver, three joiners, a warehouseman and a foundry manager; the joiners and cabinetmakers, "throughout the long history of the society ... have been well represented on the board".[4]

Table 6.1 gives figures based on the few records available of the occupational composition of organisations catering for the small saver. (The reader is also referred to the figures in table 5.2 for reported participation in savings institutions by the families studied by the C.O.S.). The figures for the Oddfellows, and for the Savings Bank in the 1860's show a pattern broadly similar to that found for some local recreational organisations, with a preponderance of skilled workers, a certain amount of participation by business and white collar groups, and under-representation of unskilled manual labour. As Horne comments of this period: "The savings bank was still mainly the bank of the skilled worker, the domestic servant, widows and children, and the small middle-class man and woman."[5] It should, however, be noted that the proportion of unskilled workers is rather higher for the Savings Bank than for either the Oddfellows, or any of the voluntary organisations analysed in table 5.3.

[4] W. Maxwell (ed.), First Fifty Years of St. Cuthbert's Co-operative Association Limited, 1859-1909, Edin., 1909, p.24.

[5] H. O. Horne, A History of Savings Banks, Oxford, 1947, p.232. Female clients and males described only as "schoolboy", "minor", etc. were not sampled for table 6.1, though students and apprentices were.

Table 6.1.
Social Composition of Oddfellows, City of Edinburgh Lodge, 1850's to 70's, and New Clients of Edinburgh Savings Bank, 1865-9 and 1895-9.

	Per centage of:		
	Oddfellows *	Savings Bank:	
		1865-9	1895-9
Professions	1	2	8
Business	8	9	8
White collar I	2	11	13
White collar II	1	2	4
Retail, warehouse	1	3	2
Manual - skilled	71	52	37
Manual - semi and unskilled	1.5	10	12
Manual - skill unclassifiable	3.5	2	1
Domestic service	4	5	8
Miscellaneous services	3.5	1	2
Police	0.5	0.9	1
Armed forces	-	0.1	0.3
Agriculture, fishing, seaman	0.5	1	2
Other, misc.	2.5	1	0.8
N	202	1420	772

Source: List of members' occupations, City of Edinburgh Lodge, No.1 Branch of the Scottish Order of Oddfellows, n.d., c1940, duplicated; occupations from 10 per cent samples of "declaration forms" completed by new clients of Edinburgh Savings Bank (excluding females and schoolboys). I am indebted to Mr. T. Donoghue, Secretary of the Lodge, for lending me the otherwise unobtainable material on the Oddfellows, and to the staff of the Bank for allowing me to consult their archives.

Notes: See Appendix 1 for occupational classification.

* The list of members' occupations is said to refer to the "1850's to 70's", but no precise dates are given. The figures are based on estimates, skilled trades said to have "several" members being counted as five each; excluding altogether these trades' unknown numbers, skilled manual = 67 per cent.

This suggests there were differences between different sorts of savings institution. Membership of a Friendly Society entailed payment of a regular subscription, whereas simply to open a bank account implied no such commitment; Friendly Societies were also distinguished from bodies like savings banks by their social life and recruitment and initiation procedures, which no doubt made for a more socially homogeneous membership.[6] The importance of the distinction is also suggested by more detailed occupational analysis. Most of the five trades said to have "several" members in the Oddfellows - masons, joiners, engineers, shoemakers and gold-beaters - belong to a now familiar list of "superior" occupations. But among the skilled manual Savings Bank clients - although the masons and joiners do appear to be over-represented - there is far less of a clear-cut occupational concentration. The figures for the Savings Bank at the later period indicate three main trends: a decline in the proportion of skilled workers, an increase in the unskilled category, and a marked increase in the professional category.[7] The dramatic increase in the professional category may be explicable by the raising in 1893 of the maximum permitted deposit.[8] The rather less marked increase in the proportion of unskilled clients

[6] This aspect of the lodge is referred to in City of Edinburgh Lodge No.1 Branch of the Scottish Order of Oddfellows, n.d., c1940; duplicated. The fact that bank deposits were liquid assets, whereas Friendly Society payments were tied to various kinds of social security provision, may also be relevant.

[7] All three differences are significant ($p < .01$) by a series of difference of proportions tests. 22 out of 58 cases assigned to the professional category in the 1890's are students; even excluding these there is a rise from 2 to 5 per cent.

[8] Horne, op.cit., p.265; cf. A. W. Kerr, History of Banking in Scotland, London, 1908, 2nd. edition, p.162.

may reflect rising real wages (although it should be noted that both manual categories fell in absolute numbers compared to the 1860's; this increase is therefore a relative one). The decline in the proportion of skilled workers - and in the total number of new accounts opened - is probably an effect of the establishment of other forms of provision; for example, the Peoples' Bank, an offshoot of the Cooperative movement, was founded in 1889.[9] It must therefore be emphasised that the figures refer to only one of a number of Friendly Society lodges in the city, and to only one of the rather smaller number of banks catering for the small saver. With this qualification, they do bear out the impression of high artisan participation in savings organisations, especially in the third quarter of the century.

There is also some evidence for one further aspect of "provident" behaviour - that relating to the set of norms governing "the proper time to marry".[10] Banks has shown how, in the Victorian middle class, men were expected to postpone marriage until their resources allowed them to maintain a certain style of married life.[11] It would seem that this discussion permeated through to the world of the artisan, at least in Edinburgh. The North Briton in 1859 advised working men to emulate middle class behaviour in this respect; and at the Royal Commission on Housing some years later the President of Edinburgh Trades Council deplored the habit of early marriage.[12]

9 Kerr, op.cit., pp.324-5. The Post Office Savings Bank should also be mentioned, though it was admittedly in existence at the earlier period.

10 J. A. Banks, Prosperity and Parenthood, London, 1954, ch.3, "The Proper Time to Marry".

11 Ibid.

12 N.B., 29 June, 1859; R.C. Housing, op.cit., Q 19275. The minimum standard for a "respectable artisan" household would of course be very different from that for the middle class.

The distribution of grooms' ages from the marriage certificates analysed in the previous chapter is therefore of some interest. In the 1860's, the carters had by far the highest per centage of grooms aged 21 and under (29 per cent); the building labourers also had a relatively high proportion (19.5 per cent); but the second highest proportion was the painters' (23 per cent), and the third highest, surprisingly, the printers' (21 per cent); the other occupations range from seven per cent (joiners) to 18 per cent (brassfinishers). In the 1890's the pattern is more clear-cut, the per centage for both unskilled occupations being higher than for any of the skilled trades. There is, then, with the exceptions noted, a tendency for artisans to marry later;[13] although it is dangerous to assume a direct connection between this and the norms articulated by writers on the "proper time to marry", it is nonetheless arguable that it has some kind of relationship to the artisan's hope of accumulating resources, and achieving a certain economic position before embarking on married life.

Evidence regarding the use made of facilities for the small saver and the age of marriage therefore suggests that artisans were especially likely to behave in ways congruent with the norms of thrift. It remains to discuss the meanings attached to this behaviour, and the part which saving might play in the lives of working people. There is a fairly clear connection, not only in the ideology of middle class observers but also in that of skilled workers themselves, between those claims to a "respectable" social status - which, as I have argued, conditioned much of the activity of the artisan in

[13] And cf. Rowntree's finding that 10 per cent of skilled workers and 21 per cent of labourers marrying in York, 1898-9, were 21 and under: op.cit., app.D, p.387.

the community and in recreational pursuits - and the ability to provide, by setting aside part of a limited income, for the future needs of oneself and one's dependents. Once again, there is the familiar insistence on the special identity of the "respectable artisan";

> "Generally speaking, should you say that your society included the poor? - No; the members of our lodge are rather of a respectable class, - what are called respectable artizans."[14]

In this emphasis on "respectability" a moralistic perspective is often in evidence:

> "He met the objections of those who looked upon the Co-operative movement as a mere matter of £ s. d., as though the members had no higher aim than the gaining of a few shillings per year in the shape of dividend, losing sight altogether of the grand moral principles which lay at the basis of the movement, as it must be patent to every right-minded and thoughtful man that, if the Co-operative element were to pervade society more generally than it did at the present time, a vast amount of the misery and crime, consequent upon intemperance and improvidence, would be altogether unknown."[15]

The imposition of "temperate" and "provident" standards of conduct seems, indeed, to have occasioned a good deal of tension during the early history of St. Cuthbert's. In one instance, some members took exception to another group adjourning to a nearby pub after meetings:

[14] R.C. Friendly Socs., op.cit., Q 9659 (secretary, Free Gardeners).

[15] Maxwell, op.cit., pp.46-7.

> "While these men were known to be sober and respectable, this habit of adjournment was very unpalatable to other members of the committee ... At last the matter was raised at a quarterly meeting, and, of course, provoked a storm. Mr. James Veitch led the attack; and, although not a teetotaler himself, he condemned the officials and those associated with them in no unmeasured terms for showing such a poor example while being leaders of social reform."[16]

It should be noted, from this striking passage, that the ground for complaint was not an allegation of heavy drinking, nor was it teetotal opposition to all drink; but rather an objection to the style of life identified with the public house. The implication that the task of a "leader of social reform" was to "set a good example" certainly points to a pervasive value system of mid-Victorian "respectability". Credit was another bone of contention at quarterly meetings of the Association; although the banning of credit was repeatedly rejected, it is clear from Maxwell's account that those occupying strategic positions in the organisation consistently opposed it, and restricted it as far as they could.[17]

The differences in membership of savings organisations, and in related patterns of behaviour thus seem to be part of more general cultural distinctions within the working class. It would, of course, be quite wrong to suppose that less skilled workers did not set aside part of their incomes for future contingencies; the

[16] Ibid., p.91; cf.pp.49,78 for other incidents concerning drink. It is of course more than likely that in the passage quoted this was a pretext for one clique to attack another; it is the appeal to certain assumptions that is of interest.

[17] Ibid., pp.32-3, 88-90, 116-7.

available evidence suggests that they did this whenever possible (though the types of contingency to which they gave priority may have differed somewhat).[18] But the institutions catering for working class savers were differentiated, in a way that reflects the stratification and the cultural divisions within the working class; those institutions that offered the largest benefits, with correspondingly higher payments from current income, catered for the upper artisan stratum.[19] Alongside the local bdges of the big Friendly Societies - which tended, as we have seen, to draw their membership from skilled workers and some lower middle class elements - were a number of small, local and often "unsound" Societies;[20] these, as well as work - or neighbourhood-based savings arrangements of an informal kind might cater for unskilled workers. The demands of financial soundness often enough coincided with those of "respectable" conduct, a socially homogeneous membership, and cultural exclusiveness. According to the district secretary of the Oddfellows, a "better class" had entered the Order since the introduction of higher rates on actuarial principles; the "poorest class" were excluded.[21] The vexed question of credit in St. Cuthbert's may have had a similar significance, especially when seen in relation to the other great difficulty of the early years:

[18] See family budgets given in Paton et al, **op.cit.**, passim.

[19] The benefits in question may include a rate of interest, home ownership, etc. as well as benefits in the Friendly Society sense.

[20] The perils of the "yearly" type of society are a recurrent theme in the North Briton; for example, 21 May, 1860.

[21] R.C. Friendly Socs., op.cit., Q 9302-3; expulsions for arrears in the 1840's mentioned in City of Edin. Lodge, op.cit., may reflect this process.

that of persuading members to give their custom to the store.[22] Despite the decision to extend credit, it is probable - given the attitude of members in key positions - that this was on a less generous scale than private traders' credit. Working people in need of credit would thus be obliged to use private shops; and even if their need for credit was occasional, private shopkeepers would no doubt make it available only in return for consistent loyalty.[23] For St. Cuthbert's to offer credit on a comparable scale would - as opponents of credit pointed out - deplete the capital and make it more and more difficult to pay any dividend. Membership of the Association, from this point of view, was one of the various forms of saving adapted to the circumstances of the artisan, the interest accruing in the form of dividend being the return on credit foregone as well as on the initial cost of a share.[24] The problems of economic viability facing any organisation catering for theworking class thus reinforced the social distinctions implied by the norms of "provident" conduct.

Finally, some comments may be made on the various uses which saving might have for working people. The most general reason for saving was undoubtedly to provide for various kinds of personal social security. This might, as in Friendly Societies and trade unions, take the form of regular payments, for which specific benefits were provided, but which could not be "cashed" unless the

22 Maxwell, op.cit., for example, pp.34, 92.

23 Cf. F. Bechhofer and B. Elliot, "An Approach to a Study of Small Shopkeepers and the Class Structure", European Jour. of Sociology, 9, 1968, p.194.

24 It is also possible that Coop retail prices were higher - if only because certain standards of quality were imposed - but I have no evidence for this.

claimant came within the relevant category of need; or it might take the form of general saving for the proverbial "rainy day". In either, or both these forms saving against unemployment, sickness, old age and death was certainly very widespread. It is, however, likely that the ability to commit regular sums from current income for specific social security purposes - rather than to a fund of liquid assets - distinguished the more prosperous sections of the working class. On the other hand, benefits (whether from Friendly Societies or trade unions) could rarely do more than tide a family over short term losses of income; those who wished to guard against longer term need would therefore require also to have a pool of savings of the general "rainy day" type.[25]

A less widespread need for saving related to the cost of tools in certain skilled trades. According to the Edinburgh News (1852), a set of masons' tools cost £2 to £2.10.0., while joiners' tools might cost as much as £10 to £25:

> "But it is not difficult to perceive that in this case what appears to be a heavy affliction is in reality a social blessing; and that the habits of saving early acquired, and the possession of property gradually increased are of ... advantage to the progress and elevation of their possessor."[26]

[25] For the very short term nature of the relief given by Friendly Societies, see R.C. Friendly Socs., op.cit., Q 9708-9729 (assistant inspector of the parochial board, St. Cuthbert's, Edin.).

[26] Edin. News, 2, 9 Oct., 1852. Shoemakers presumably also provided tools, at least until the advent of workshops; the printing and engineering trades do not seem to have had to buy any tools.

In a brewery labourer's family studied by Paton et al (c1900) the son, an apprentice joiner, gave 5s. of his 6s. wage to his mother, who "can count on 37s. a-week but she saves out of this to buy the more expensive joiners' tools for her son".[27] It is also worth noting, in this context, that the masons and joiners have the two smallest proportions of grooms aged 21 and under in the 1860's, and that they appear to be over-represented among the Savings Bank clients during the same years.[28]

A third type of saving related to the system of rent payment. According to the President of Edinburgh Trades Council, only the "very poor class" paid weekly; yearly tenancies and half-yearly payment was the rule.[29] It was therefore no doubt fairly common for those who could manage it to put money aside for the rent; Paton et al report two cases where the Coop dividend was ear-marked for this purpose.[30]

These purposes of saving - social security, tools, rent - were of a relatively modest character, related to the exigencies of day-to-day existence in working class communities (though, as we have seen, the level of provision, for example the standard and cost of housing, varied widely within the working class). But there are also some indications of the accumulation of savings, and sometimes of property on a rather more ambitious scale. St. Cuthbert's was almost crippled in its first year when the opponents of credit, who were able to muster no more than nine votes against 30 at the quarterly

27 Paton et al, op.cit., pp.30-1.

28 Masons account for 7 per cent, joiners for 6 per cent, while other trades of comparable size have about half these per centages.

29 R.C. Housing, op.cit., Q 19176-7.

30 Paton et al, op.cit., pp.23, 26.

meeting, could nonetheless withdraw between them about half the working capital in protest; 23 years later, in 1883, the committee held £1000 of capital, 10 per cent of the total.[31] The larger accumulations of savings were doubtless connected with the trend to house ownership. In 1885, St. Cuthbert's started giving loans to members for house purchase; and the upper artisan composition of purchasers of the Cooperative Building Co. houses, and of borrowers from finance companies has already been noted.[32] The accumulation of savings was thus often linked to the hopes of moving to superior housing, and the associated evaluations of the home, considered in the previous chapter. A further use for accumulated personal savings may be mentioned. For skilled men in certain trades the possibility of setting up in business on their own was a real one. The founder of Messrs. Hunter & Foulis, bookbinders, purchased the business with savings accumulated by "an epic of Scottish frugality" - from his earnings as a journeyman, "a small legacy, and a loan of £75".[33] This brings us to the question of the social mobility prospects of skilled workers or their children, with which the second section of the chapter is concerned.

ii. Social Mobility

The habit of saving was sometimes seen in the context of what the Edinburgh News called the "progress and elevation" of the skilled worker.[34] The aspects of this "elevation" so far considered have reference mainly to the artisan's life outside his work, in the local community. To interpret fully such decidedly ambiguous phrases as

31 Maxwell, op.cit., pp.33, 125.

32 Ibid., p.139; and cf. footnote 3, above.

33 A Hundred Years of Publishers' Bookbinding, 1857-1957, Edin., privately printed, pp.9-10.

34 Edin. News 9 Oct., 1852.

"progress and elevation", "rising in the social scale", and so on, we have also to examine the possibility of movement to a superior occupational position. Although there are few rigorous data for any of the kinds of mobility discussed below, some general points may nonetheless be made.

It is convenient to consider together first of all those changes in occupational position where the man remained in the industry where he had worked as a wage-earner, and continued to rely, in some measure, on his craft skills and practical working experience. It is important to set those types of mobility to which subsequent analyses of class structure have drawn attention - the crossing of the line between manual and non-manual labour, or between employee and employer - in the context of mobility <u>within the skilled manual working class</u>. This is probably one of those commonplace facets of working class life so obvious to contemporaries that it has been ignored by historians. But, as the discussion of economic position in chapter 3 indicated, there was in every trade a more or less wide range of variation, from those in casual employment who could perhaps hope to average little more, if not less than a labourer's earnings, to those whose key contribution to the production process encouraged their employers to offer special inducements and to "hoard" them, even in periods of depression. Quite apart from variations in the incidence of unemployment, there was almost certainly a wide spread of individual and company wage-rates, below, and more rarely above the standard union rate. The bookbinders, a prosperous trade, nonetheless complained that men were receiving an "improver's" wage, instead of the full rate, at the end of their apprenticeships.[35] Given this industrial structure, it is likely

[35] Bookbinders C.U. Minutes, 16 June, 1887, 10 Sept., 1894.

that the characteristic ambition of the skilled worker was to enter the more desirable jobs in his trade. Conversely, for those already in the favoured sections, there was the fear of falling - through some loss of efficiency from a long period of illness or unemployment, accident or aging - into the depressed and casually employed low paid "tail" of the trade.[36] The position of the skilled worker would thus depend on his efficiency and sometimes on his versatility, rather than simply on his occupation. Here the quality of apprenticeship training might be important.[37] The man's ability to keep abreast of technical change throughout his working life also affected his prospects. It was said of printing machinemen that the man who understood new types of machine "has his situation secure, and his wages best"; smiths sought experience in the "more exact working-shop of an engineer", after serving a traditional apprenticeship.[38]

It seems likely that when the artisan thought of "progress and elevation" it was mainly this struggle for survival and promotion within the skilled working class that he had in mind. Many of the white collar and managerial positions recruited from skilled labour- and there can be little doubt that such promotion was far more common in the nineteenth century than in the twentieth, although we have no rigorous data - could be seen simply as minor extensions of the "artisan career". Printing overseers (works managers) were appointed from compositors; a joiner, as the "comptroller general"

[36] See, "The Journeyman Engineer", The Great Unwashed, London, 1868, pp.282-3, for the loss of efficiency following a period out of work.

[37] Artisans often complained of the quality of apprenticeship; for example, reader's letter, S.T.C., March, 1896.

[38] "Old Machine Manager", op.cit., p.vii; Edin. News, 13 Aug., 1853.

of building work, might become a clerk of works, a surveyor, even (in the 1850's) an architect.[39] There is less information for other trades, but the general importance, in all industries, of craft skills and experience presumably favoured the appointment of ex-journeymen to managerial and white collar posts.

A second form of mobility which may likewise have been a relatively small extension of the skilled worker "career ladder" was the traditional move from the status of journeyman to that of small master. Movement of this kind was still, in the mid-nineteenth century, of some relevance. There were, however, important variations between different sectors of industry. The prospect of setting up in business with the resources in the reach of the artisan clearly depended on such factors as the amount of fixed capital, and the average plant size of the industry; we saw from table 4.1 that both fixed capital and the size of enterprises were somewhat larger in printing and engineering than in the building trades and shoemaking. The not altogether reliable census figures for employment status (table 6.2) give some indication that the proportion of employers and self-employed was in fact higher in the labour-intensive industries.[40]

[39] Gordon, op.cit., p.316; Edin. News, 9 Oct., 1852.

[40] For the unreliability of the data, see, Report of the Committee ... to enquire into ... the Census, PP 1890, LVIII, esp. Q 2031 (Registrar General for Scotland). The agreement of the figures for the two dates suggests, however, that they at least show the direction of differences between occupations.

Table 6.2.
Per centage classified as "Employer" and "Working on own Account" in Selected Occupations, 1891 and 1901

	Per centage classified as:			
	1891		1901	
	Employer	Self-employed	Employer	Self-employed
Printing *	2	0.3	1	0.2
Masons +	9	0.4	7	0.2
Joiners +	11	2.6	10	2.2
Painters +	15	2.2	12	0.9
Engineering ƃ	4	0.8	2	0.65
Shoemaker	13	12	10	12

Source: Calculated from census occupation tables.

Notes:
* Printers, lithographers, Bookbinders and paper rulers combined.
+ "Builders" classified as employers added to employers in each specific trade.
ƃ All occupations included under "Engineering" in part A of table 2.3: see Appendix 2.

Table 6.3.
Turnover of Business Names in Post Office Directories

	Per cent of names surviving 10 years or more:			
	1866	1868	1894	1900
Printers	58	61	73	76
Bookbinders	73	62.5	69	74
Masons	48	44	51	50
Joiners	55	53	67	60
Painters	59.5	69	81	82
Engineers	56	63	68	58
Shoemakers	51	48	43	39

Source: Samples of firms listed in Edinburgh and Leith Post Office Directory. Varying proportions chosen at random, to give samples of similar size (N varies between 25 and 51).

Certain variations in opportunities for wage-earners to become owners of small industrial enterprises may thus be inferred from structural features of the various local industries. The tracing of samples of names taken from the trades section of the Post Office Directories for the city gives a further indirect indication of mobility chances, on the assumption that a relatively high rate of mobility of this type would also imply a high turnover of businesses. (The years were selected so as to give a boom and slump year in both decades).[41] These data undoubtedly have many defects, of which the likely exclusion from Directories of the smaller and more ephemeral concerns - as well as possible variations over time in this respect - are only the most obvious. Other defects include the fact that the disappearance of a name does not necessarily mean the end of the business; and many new names may reflect the purchase of highly expensive plant by men of some wealth, rather than the launching of a new enterprise by an ex-wage-earner. But the figures do indicate some interesting tendencies. The proportion surviving 10 years or more is higher for the printers, bookbinders, painters and engineers than for the other trades in every year except 1900 (when the joiners have a higher proportion than the engineers). Thus it is generally the case that the more labour-intensive industries (building and shoemakers) have more turnover. (The painters are an exception, and thus contrast with the other building trades in this, as well as other respects). The figures

[41] The list of cyclical peak and trough years given in Slaven, op. cit., p.235 was consulted for this purpose. Various cognate headings were searched (e.g. "ironfounders" for engineers, "stationers" for printing trades, etc.) before a name was coded as having disappeared.

also suggest a trend toward greater stability, comparing the 1890's with the earlier period; for the printers, masons, joiners and painters both the 1894 and 1900 figures are higher than either of the figures for the 1860's.[42] The rate of survival thus varies with industrial differences in capitalisation and the size of enterprise. And there is a trend to greater stability of business ownership, especially for those trades with higher rates of turnover at the earlier period. Thus, although the turnover of business points to important variations in opportunities, these variations become less marked, with a narrowing of opportunities in those sectors with a hitherto more "open" structure of ownership.

It is, of course, true that we cannot assume that "new" owners were in fact ex-journeymen. But, taking the turnover data together with known structural features of different industries, it is reasonable to argue that those trades with the higher turnover rates were those in which wage-earners would be most likely to acquire property in the means of production. To assess the significance of this it must be remembered that the other side of the coin was a good deal of movement in the other direction. As the Registrar General for Scotland told the Committee on the Census (1890), "people who are employers one day and employed the next" were common "in all small trades"; Hobsbawm points out that men setting up in business might retain their union membership.[43]

[42] The defects of the data make significance testing a somewhat unprofitable exercise; it may, however, be mentioned that the difference between the two periods (1866/8 and 1894/1900 combined - there were no significant differences between the boom and slump years) was significant for the printers (X^2 = 3.83, $p < .05$) and painters (X^2 = 5.70, $p < .01$).

[43] Committee ... into ... the Census, op.cit., Q 2030; Hobsbawm, op.cit., p.296.

In all industries, even the labour-intensive "small trades", the small firm sector existed alongside a more restricted number of larger and more stable firms. Thus the more ephemeral kind of engineering business - which might be little more than a back-street smithy equipped with a few second-hand machine-tools - contrasted with large local firms like Bertram's, which were among the world leaders in the production of particular kinds of machinery. The owners of the small businesses, particularly those who were self-employed, were clearly closer socially to skilled workers than to the owners of the larger firms.

We may thus conclude - although we lack the kind of biographical case-studies that would prove this - that acquiring his own business was unlikely to take the ex-journeyman far from the social world with which he was familiar. Like the promotion to managerial positions considered earlier, it was a relatively small extension of the "career ladder" within the skilled working class. We must now consider briefly various kinds of employment opportunity - especially in public services - that involved moving outside the industry, if not far outside the artisan stratum. It has already been suggested, in the context of the social contacts suggested by voluntary organisation membership, that a range of white collar posts in the public services, as well as in industry, were filled by skilled workers or their children.[44] As noted then, the pupil teaching system provides the best documentation for this pattern.[45] For other, socially similar kinds of white collar

[44] See above, ch.5, pp.181-2.

[45] See the works cited in ch.5, footnote 63 to p.182.

occupation there is no comparable evidence, beyond that of the possibly atypical cases of individuals whose biographies are recorded because they became in some way public figures (mainly through activity in the labour movement). Thus William Paterson, ex-secretary of the Associated Joiners, became fire master of Glasgow; two other prominent Edinburgh trade unionists (a shoemaker and a cabinetmaker) became respectively a superintending school attendance officer and registrar for the Canongate.[46] These cases serve to draw attention to the fact that trade union and political activity was becoming, from the mid-nineteenth century, a means of movement into non-manual positions.

This does not, of course, mean that men embarked on labour activity with an "official" career in mind; it was rather the unanticipated result of the development of the movement.[47] St. Cuthbert's decided in 1873 to discontinue the policy of hiring men from the ordinary retail trade, and to appoint store managers from the membership; while the first manager of the Scottish Cooperative Wholesale Society was the son of a prominent Edinburgh trade unionist and founder of St. Cuthbert's.[48] Apart from employment in the institutions of the labour movement itself, it is likely that the growing role of its representatives on local and national bodies gave access to jobs in the public services.

46 Biographical information on Paterson and John Cubie in MacDougall (ed.), op.cit., p.xxiv; on John Mallinson in W. H. Marwick, "Municipal Politics in Victorian Edinburgh", Book of the Old Edin. Club, 33, 1969.

47 Michels' classic account of labour leaders is marred by his assumption, on very flimsy evidence, that workers joined the movement in order to rise to an official post: R. Michels, Political Parties, New York, 1959, Dover edition, pt.IV, esp. pp.272-5, 289.

48 Maxwell, op.cit., pp.106-7, 27-8, 94.

As to trends over time in the various types of white collar employment, little more than informed guessing is possible. Those positions associated with the growth of the labour movement undoubtedly expanded. The expansion of other sectors of white collar employment in the late nineteenth century may, however, have been offset, so far as the artisan stratum were concerned, by the growing importance of formal educational qualifications, the establishment of longer, more rigidly institutionalised white collar "career ladders", and growing competition from children of the expanding clerical groups for access to white collar posts of all kinds.[49] The disappearance of the fluid and often informal patterns of recruitment to responsible and qualified white collar posts characteristic of the earlier period may thus have reinforced the effect of trends in business ownership, in narrowing the possibility of movement outside the ranks of manual wage-earners.

It is in any case unlikely that any of the jobs recruited from artisans were far removed from the upper strata of the manual working class. This has already been implied by the argument that the small business and white collar groups with whom artisans might associate in voluntary organisations are correctly seen as inhabiting the fringes of an artisan social world, rather than the intermediate rungs of a societal ladder of occupational statuses. The career of William Paterson may again be cited to illustrate the haziness at this period of boundaries which, in the twentieth century, have become far more clearly marked. The son of a small master joiner in Elgin, Paterson worked in various white collar jobs after leaving school, then served an apprenticeship in his father's

[49] As Hobsbawm implies, op.cit., pp.274-5, 297.

business; coming to Edinburgh at the age of 20 (in 1863), he became first branch, then general secretary of the union, and ended his life, as already noted, as fire master of Glasgow.[50]

I would therefore interpret the movement of skilled workers into small business or white collar occupations as a move within the artisan social world, rather than as a tenacious foothold on the lower reaches of the middle class world. It should nonetheless be emphasised that the artisan's social experience - especially in the third quarter of the century - might well dispose him to think in terms of individual ascent on a "ladder" of occupational opportunities, and to seek a relatively long term improvement in his personal situation by practising the virtues of thrifty behaviour. But his ladder was clearly separate from that of the middle class, and its most important rungs may well have been those <u>below</u> the line between manual labour and what, for want of an alternative, must be rather misleadingly called the "lower middle class."

[50] Biographical sketch in <u>Ref</u>., 6 May, 1872 (reprinted from the <u>Beehive</u>).

CHAPTER 7

THE MEANINGS OF "RESPECTABILITY"

The various aspects of social behaviour analysed in the preceding chapters suggest the emergence in the third quarter of the nineteenth century of particular styles of life and patterns of aspiration, distinguishing a "superior" stratum of skilled workers. It is therefore valid to talk of the cultural formation of an upper stratum, or labour aristocracy, as well as of marked structural differences in class situation within the manual working class. The connection of this process with values of "respectability", "provident" conduct, "progress and elevation", etc. has been an interpretative thread running through the whole analysis. In this sense, it is possible to identify the formation of the labour aristocracy with the diffusion of bourgeois ideologies and norms of conduct. But this statement certainly needs some qualification, to avoid oversimplifying a complex pattern of social relations and values - in particular, to account also for the formation of those specifically working class institutions with which subsequent chapters will be concerned. We have to consider the possibility that the meanings of the common language of "respectability" may have varied, in ways that gave rise to important social tensions. This relates to the view, outlined at the beginning of the study, that we should follow Gramsci in seeing the behaviour and values of popular cultures as containing internal contradictions, which make them incoherent and potentially unstable.

To assess the wider significance of the aspirations of the "superior" artisan stratum, we must begin by discussing briefly the perspective of those elements of the middle class - in Edinburgh,

especially the professional intelligentsia - particularly concerned to foster "respectable" patterns of behaviour among the working class. The attitude of these groups is relevant, since they often appear in "patronage" roles within what may be described as the institutional framework of working class "self improvement". Middle class observers, then, commonly interpreted the behaviour patterns under discussion, in terms of a model of the "respectable", "temperate", "self improving" working man. Dr. Begg evokes the image nicely, in his description of the houses erected by the Co-operative Building Company. "When he enters - which, of course, he will do very respectfully - he will be greatly pleased with the clean and tidy interior of the dwellings, the carpets, arm-chairs, libraries, family Bibles, and, in a word, every appliance by which a man can make his home comfortable and happy." And the inevitable moral follows:

> "What necessity have such men for other engagements, during the comparatively short hours of leisure, beyond the range of their own families? Here is the true antidote to the public-house! What a struggle will such men make before they dream of applying for poors'-rates!"[1]

There were, no doubt, many variations on the theme, which cannot be examined here. That is is nonetheless valid to talk of a deeply held social imagery, structuring middle class social action, is perhaps indicated by one finding from the Charity Organisation Society survey: 71 per cent of those families described in terms of general approval (i.e., such epithets as "decent", "sober", "respectable", and so on), but only 46 per cent of those not so

[1] Begg, op.cit., pp.46-7.

described are also reported to participate in one or more of the activities analysed in table 5.2.

The terms of the middle class social imagery are, as we have seen, often enough reproduced by spokesmen for the institutions of the artisan world. But it must also be emphasised that values of this kind co-existed with alternative modes of conduct, sharply divergent from those of the middle class. The ideological defence of trade unionism was the most articulate expression of this, involving as it did a critique of certain basic individualistic assumptions about the economic order. This dimension of artisan life, which has so far been neglected, is explored in part three of the study. More generally, it is important not to allow the relative economic prosperity of the aristocrat of labour to obscure the fact that he was closely enmeshed in the realities of working class existence in a violently cyclical low-wage economy. The deep rooted habits of solidarity and mutual aid which developed in response to these realities were never completely obliterated by the rhetoric of "self help" - that rhetoric might, indeed, be reinterpreted, in a collective rather than purely individual sense.[2] Thus Thomas Wright, the "journeyman engineer", in his evocation of the experience of tramping and the solidarity of the trade, at one point articulates a practical ethic in marked contrast to that of bodies like the Charity Organisation Society: "it is better to be 'had' sometimes than from over-suspicion to refuse such help as it is in your power to give to a case that may be one of real distress."[3]

In organisations closely associated with the image of the thrifty "respectable artisan" solidaristic values played some part. The

[2] R. Harrison, "Afterword", in Smiles, op.cit., pp.268-9.

[3] "Journeyman Engineer", op.cit., p.160.

ritual of certain Friendly Society lodges gave membership a meaning beyond its purely economic functions. Thus the Oddfellows' City of Edinburgh Lodge resolved, "each Brother shall furnish himself with an apron ... be it understood that they shall be all of one pattern", and held regular social gatherings.[4] And the survival of the Coop, against the opposition of vested interests and other difficulties, probably owed something to solidaristic behaviour by members; on one occasion it was decided to continue an uneconomic van service in recognition of the loyalty of members who had been evicted, rather than stop using the store at the behest of their landlord, a local grocer.[5]

The co-existence of solidaristic values and practices with aspirations expressed in the language of middle class individualism made for a certain ambivalence in the ideology of the artisan. This ambivalence is perhaps reflected in an old member's comments on the beginning of St. Cuthbert's:

> "We were all yet working-men, but we began to have the feeling that we were something more, and would soon be business men, reaping profits we had for long been sowing for others."[6]

As so often in statements of this kind, the precise meaning of the hope of becoming "something more" is ambiguous; it might mean either the hope of rising individually from the ranks of the manual working class, or the desire to change the position of the working class (or at least its more "respectable" sections), to obtain a corporate stake in the community and social recognition, through the building of powerful working class institutions: "some of us found a new

[4] City of Edin. Lodge, op.cit.

[5] Maxwell, op.cit., p.125. [6] Ibid., p.27.

relish in our butter, ham and meal, in that it was turned over to us from our own shop, through our own committee."[7] Thomas Wright emphasised that the "intelligent artisan", the man who looked to an improvement in the position of his class, was altogether commoner and more influential in working class institutions than the "educated working man", the man striving to climb out of the working class.[8]

One meaning of the extremely ambiguous language in which skilled workers often expressed their aspirations is therefore the claim to social recognition of the "respectability" of the artisan. The general points made in chapter 1 about the concept of social status are relevant here; I would argue that the claim to receive "social honour" reflects an assertion of group consciousness, with the possibility of conflict between groups with alternative value systems and criteria of prestige. As Wright remarks, his term the Great Unwashed: "exactly embodies the working class idea of themselves, excluding, as it does, not only the 'counter-skipper' class, whom the great unwashed regard (unjustly perhaps) as their inferiors, but also professional men, merchants, M.P.'s and others".[9] Feelings of this sort indicate the existence of social groups which have alternative criteria for allocating prestige. Whereas the clerk emphasises his clean hands and educational attainments, the skilled worker emphasises his skill and strength, the indispensability of manual labour - dirty hands are the sign one does useful work. Status claims cannot be assumed to reflect an unequivocal acceptance of the values of the dominant group in society; they may, on the contrary, reflect a certain social tension between groups with alternative value systems.

[7] Ibid. [8] "Journeyman Engineer", op.cit., pp.6-20.
[9] "Journeyman Engineer", op.cit., p.viii.

The claim to "respectability" must thus be set in the context of a strong sense of class pride. I would argue that it is properly interpreted as a claim to status recognition and citizenship on behalf of skilled workers as a corporate group. In some ways that claim was met by the 1867 Reform Bill. But at local level the tensions were harder to resolve. Partly this was a matter of the economic circumstances of skilled workers, and the consequently high visibility of their class position. The artisan Volunteers, for example, were without rifles, "while lawyers and merchants and civil servants swaggered with their short Enfields", until the War Office were bludgeoned into subsidising the movement.[10] Members of St. Cuthbert's complained that assistants used to the private trade treated them with contempt; presumably this reflects the social difference between Cooperators and the middle class customers of the large private grocers.[11]

A series of apparently trivial incidents illuminate the meanings of class and status. The North Briton commented on the Burns centenary:

> "It is the people alone who can truly keep the birthday of Robert Burns, for they best of all understand him and claim him as one of themselves. Do not, then, ye workingmen of Edinburgh, give him up to the higher classes of the city."[12]

In the Minutes of the Trades Council we find a record of reiterated protest about community issues: against a proposed road through the Meadows "for the convenience of a comparatively small number of citizens"; an imputed slight to the working classes in the

[10] Macdonald, op.cit., p.31. [11] Maxwell, op.cit., pp.47-8.

[12] N.B. 1 Dec., 1858.

allocation of tickets for the Volunteer Review of 1881 "especially as they had contributed so much to the success of the Volunteer Movement"; restrictions on football, again in the Meadows.[13] There is certainly no lack of evidence for the resistance to any hint of patronage or social subordination. The Typographical Circular commented on proposals for a printers' Volunteer company: "If the present movement fail it will be from the way in which it is managed, and from the very old-fashioned notion that if the thing be patronised by the 'maister' the man will of course 'fall in'."[14] At a meeting to discuss the formation of the Working Men's Club, the secretary of the Edinburgh Typographical Society protested against: "a kind of demi-charitable affair, a hybrid between a soup kitchen and a penny reading room with in all probability interesting old women in black mittens to talk in a goody-goody strain to the recipients of their bounty."[15]

How then, did this insistence on the social independence of the working man relate to middle class leadership in the urban community? This question is perhaps best answered by a rather impressionistic, and therefore tentative analysis of the organisational framework within which the life style of working class "respectability" was formed and projected. Voluntary organisations concerned with leisure provision ranged from facilities run entirely by and for working people, to those provided by philanthropic employers, churches and other middle class bodies, on a charitable or "patronage" basis. Organisations with a fairly clear-cut middle class central leadership, but also with relatively

[13] T.C. Minutes, 11 Aug., 1874, 2 Aug., 1881, 25 Oct., 1881.

[14] S.T.C., Jan., 1860.

[15] N.B., 13 April, 1864; the speaker, James Wilkie, is mentioned as secretary of the Typographical Society in the Trades Council Minutes, 9 Oct., 1860.

autonomous sub-units, of varying social composition, comprise a further category. The loose knit coalitions of Liberal politics exemplify this third type, as perhaps does the "spirit of emulation, and the friendly rivalry that existed between the various sectional bodies" of the Volunteers.[16] We would expect the nature of skilled workers' attachments to vary with the form of organisation. Attachments to bodies of the "patronage" type are likely to have been limited, with a considerable "calculative" component - one fairly well documented case in point being the connection of working people with facilities (especially educational) offered by churches and Sunday schools.[17] Given the resistance to patronage and deference, we would expect the fullest working class participation in those organisations (or sub-units of organisations) less directly controlled by middle class groups.

There is, however, a sense in which this whole range of organisations, facilities and activities were knit together, under middle class hegemony: the distinctive institutions of the artisan stratum were thus contained within a social world dominated by the middle class. This process is perhaps best seen as one of implicitly negotiated accommodation between middle class leadership and working class resistance to the more direct form of social subordination. Working men eager for "self improvement", but loath to accept patronage could perceive this situation as one of bargaining, rather than of social subordination. The peculiarities of the local class structure are also important here: the diversity of the middle class and the rivalries between middle class groups made for a degree of pluralism in the leadership of local institutions.

16 Stephen, op,cit., p.62.

17 See: A. A. MacLaren, "Prosbyterianism and the Working Class in a Mid-nineteenth Century City", Scottish Historical Review, 46, 1967; H. Pelling, Popular Politics and Society in Late Victorian Britain, London, 1968, pp.30-1.

Certain categories of public figure seem to have played key roles in linking the world of the "respectable" working class to that of the middle class. Voluntary organisations of all kinds were linked up into a network, largely through the overlapping activities of these individuals. The Free Gardeners, for example, gave honorary membership to "gentlemen of means who wish to encourage the society."[18] Liberal-Radical politicians (especially Town Councillors) were responsible for one set of links, often reaching working arrangements with the Trades Council.[19] Other identifiable categories include some philanthropists and social reformers (such as Dr. Begg), professional men who would deliver lectures in the cause of "self culture", and so on. Sometimes the categories overlap, as in the person of Lord Gifford, who addressed the Flower Show exhibitors in 1870: a lawyer, associated with voluntary work in Dr. Guthrie's Ragged Schools, an "advanced politician", he "often lectured to literary and philosophical societies".[20] We frequently find Volunteer officers in similar roles. John Gorrie, a lawyer, was involved in the raising of the first artisan companies, lectured for the Trades Council on "diggings into the city records", and judged the Working Man's Flower Show; another Volunteer officer chaired a Trades Council public meeting, and later used the machinery of the Trades Council to appeal for recruits to the Volunteers; an Ensign of Volunteers marshalled the reform demonstration of 1866.[21] Middle class public

18 R.C. on Friendly Societies, op.cit., Q.9648.

19 MacDougall, op.cit., pp.xxviii-xxx, p.235, footnote. There are many similar references in the Trades Council Minutes and in the press for the 1860's and 70's.

20 Dictionary of National Biography.

21 For Gorrie: Stephen, op.cit., p.221; MacDougall, op.cit., p.72, footnote; T.C. Minutes, 30 Nov., 1861; Ref. 13 Aug., 1870. For the other officers mentioned: T.C. Minutes, 20 Feb., 26 March, 1861; Scotsman, 19 Nov., 1866.

figures therefore graced the platforms, even of the more independent type of working class institution. This form of social recognition can be related to the status claims of the "superior" artisan. A characteristic note was struck by Lord Gifford at the Flower Show: "in addressing the assemblage before him as 'ladies and gentlemen' said he never used the word with more confidence than he did at that time because he believed that every workingman who loved and tended a plant was a gentleman, and every workingman's wife or daughter who loved and tended a plant was a lady."[22] The desire for this kind of social approval certainly reflects a degree of acceptance of the established order. But the consciousness involved is, at the same time, not precisely deferential. It is rather a kind of demagogic flattery: the notion of the gentleman appearing as a bizarre surrogate for the "citizen" of more rapidly democratised nations. Thomas Wright comments on this sort of rhetoric, with perhaps a hint of cynicism: "I am a working man - what a gentleman wanting my vote (if I had one) at election time, or the chairman at the prize-distribution meeting of an industrial exhibition, would probably call 'an intelligent artisan'."[23]

The class relationships involved in the pursuit of "respectability" were therefore complex; certainly they are not adequately described by terms such as "deference". The more direct forms of patronage and control from above were typically resisted by artisans, who insisted on the autonomy of their institutions. Yet the aspirations and norms of conduct of such institutions were frequently stated in a language adopted from the dominant middle class. Thus the style of life created by the

[22] Ref. 13 Aug., 1870. [23] "Journeyman Engineer", op.cit., p.126.

upper artisan strata may be seen, from one point of view, as a transmission of middle class values - certainly as an assertion of social superiority, a self conscious cultural exclusion of less favoured working class groups. On the other hand, the very pursuit of "respectability", especially in so far as it involved claims to status recognition and participation in local institutions, was a source of social tension, a focal point in the growth of a sense of class identity. This, and the fact that the dominant bourgeois ideology always co-existed with other modes of thought and behaviour made the outlook of the labour aristocracy an ambivalent and unstable one.

PART III: CLASS MOVEMENTS

GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO PART III

In the first two parts of this study I tried to show the existence in the Edinburgh working class of a distinctive upper, "aristocratic" stratum. In part one it was argued that an advantaged group of "superior" artisans can be identified, both in the workings of the labour market and in the organisation of industrial production. In part two I attempted to show that this advantaged group was also distinguished culturally by specific patterns of behaviour outside the employment situation: in residence, leisure, social segregation in the urban community and personal aspirations. All these patterns of behaviour can be related to the formation of a group identity within the stratified urban society of Victorian Edinburgh, and to a more or less conscious cultural exclusiveness; and such frequently encountered terms as "respectability", "self help", "thrift" appear to indicate the diffusion, within this distinctive upper artisan world, of the language of the dominant middle class.

But this picture had to be qualified in certain important respects. In so far as artisans did use the dominant language, they adapted it to their circumstances, which often demanded that "self help" should take the form of collective provision. Artisan aspirations were thus bound up with a sense of collective advance and improvement in the corporate position of "the working class" - however ambiguously the membership of that class may have been conceived. The dominant value system therefore took on a particular meaning in the artisan milieu; the version of that value system to which artisans were committed was necessarily a "negotiated" one.[1] It co-existed, moreover, with modes of conduct and values of a more clearly solidaristic kind, sharply divergent from those of the

[1] Parkin, op.cit., p.92.

middle class. Popular ideology and the social subordination it mediated have thus to be seen as complex and incoherent.

In this final part of the study I explore an important aspect of working class institutions and culture that has so far been neglected: the organised articulation of collective interests through trade union and political bodies. The three chapters that follow will attempt to show the impact of the upper stratum on patterns of collective action and class conflict, and thereby test out, at this level of analysis, the explanatory power of the concept of labour aristocracy. My interest in trade unionism and working class politics is not to give a comprehensive account of their development,[2] but to consider them as elements in working class cultures and ideologies. This task is made difficult by the nature of the evidence. The record of industrial and political activity only occasionally sheds much direct light on the world views of participants. The evidence is therefore inevitably fragmentary and imperfect - and it anyway relates only to the minorities of men actively engaged in trade union and political organisations. That evidence is nonetheless essential to complete the picture so far presented, and is, indeed, broadly compatible with this picture. Thus I will argue in chapter 8 that the 1860's and 70's saw the emergence of a form of class consciousness, linked to the struggle to establish stronger and more formal craft union organisation, and to the demand for political rights; this class formation was marked by the specific situation and outlook of the upper stratum. The wave of industrial activity in the boom of the 1870's, coinciding with the

[2] Fuller accounts will be found in: W. H. Fraser, "Trade Unions, Reform and the Election of 1868 in Scotland", Scottish Historical Review, 50, 1971; Greaves, op.cit.; MacDougall, op. cit.; Marwick, op.cit.

agitation to reform the labour laws, and the political self assertion of organised workers following the 1867 Reform Bill sharpened the sense of a separate urban working class identity and political presence. That separate identity was nonetheless contained within political institutions dominated by upper and middle class groups - just as the various voluntary organisations of the urban community were linked up to form a network in which middle class elements played certain key roles. The typical language of working class demands moreover reflects a corporate claim to status and symbolic social acceptance which relates clearly enough to the value system of working class "respectability". In the 1880's and 90's this situation changed. These decades saw a far more consistent attempt to extend working class organisation on a broader and politically autonomous basis. These developments, with which chapter 9 will be concerned, are related to changes in the situation and culture of the artisan strata. The continuing importance of the upper stratum of skilled workers thus forms a link with the earlier period; in the concluding chapter an attempt is made to set the changing position and outlook of the labour aristocracy in the wider historical context.

CHAPTER 8

TRADE UNIONISM AND WORKING CLASS POLITICS IN THE MID-VICTORIAN PERIOD

The labour movement in mid-Victorian Edinburgh was, not surprisingly, dominated by the craft unions of skilled workers, although there are some occasional signs of organisation among less skilled groups.[1] Many of the Edinburgh trades had histories of local organisation, at least from the early nineteenth century; from the 1850's these local bodies tended, as MacDougall points out, to become branches of Scottish or British unions. Thus the Edinburgh Typographical Society was one of the bodies which federated in 1852 to form the Scottish Typographical Association, and the local Union Society merged in 1872 with the hitherto much smaller branch of the Bookbinders Consolidated Union.[2] This was, of course, only one aspect of a tendency to increasingly formal and elaborate union organisation, which was no doubt a response to the growing scale of industry, mobility of labour and organisation among the employers. The decline of the face-to-face occupational community may well have created the need for more formal methods of collective regulation of wages and conditions. As a writer in the Typographical Circular argued:

> "Fifty years ago, the means or mechanism by which anything useful was accomplished was exceedingly strong, and readily and effectively used ... if a question was raised affecting the well being of any one man or any body of men in any trade, every individual member of

[1] MacDougall, op.cit., pp.xviii-xxi.

[2] Ibid., p.xx; S.T.A., Rules, 1852, Webb C.81.i. The commonest type between 1850 and 1900 were the Scottish unions, the most important British unions being the A.S.E., Bookbinders Consolidated Union, and, from the 1880's, the Boot and Shoe Operatives; the most important purely local societies were the Bookbinders Union Society (until 1872) and the Cordwainers.

that branch of industry felt and spoke upon the matter as if his own honour was at stake and his own personal interests were involved; ..."[3]

Too much attention to organisational changes may, on the other hand, obscure basic continuities in the structure and functioning of craft unions. Much initiative still rested with the branch. All bargaining about wages and conditions was at local level, although it is true that here the activities of branches were, constitutionally speaking, subject to considerable central control. There is, however, a crucial difference between "forward" movements - demands for wage rises, etc. which needed the sanction of the national executive - and the defence of existing conditions and practices.[4] This latter type of activity has been aptly described as "regulation by union rule".[5] It depended on constant vigilance and initiative at workshop and branch level, and was closely related to the occupational community and the solidaristic values of craft cultures. Such values are often articulated in the preambles to union rule-books; the objective of the Bookbinders Union Society (1846) was to: "keep within proper limits all attempts on the part of the employer to tamper with the rights and privileges of his workmen".[6] This form of defensive combination was evidently not confined to the formal membership of unions. The bookbinders' minutes, for example, on one occasion record the readiness of non-members "to Help and work in co-operation with the Society".[7] It is therefore misleading to focus on the

[3] S.T.C., Aug., 1859.

[4] See strike regulations in the various rule-books in sect.C of the Webb collection. The joiners' branch minutes show the implementation of these procedures: Edin. Central B., Assoc. Joiners, Minutes, e.g. 14 March, 1872, 30 Nov., 1876.

[5] Child, op.cit., pt.III

[6] Edin. Union Soc. of Journeymen Bookbinders, Rules, 1846. Similar references to "rights and privileges", "customs of the trade", etc. are found in many of the rule-books in the Webb collection.

[7] Bookbinders Union Soc., Minutes, 20 Feb., 1864.

development of formal union organisation, to the exclusion of the wider occupational solidarity which was often crucial to the upholding of craft conditions and practices.

Industrial disputes arising from "regulation by union rule" were often on an extremely small scale. In one instance, the Bookbinders Union Society demonstrated with an employer about his new workshop rules; he refused to withdraw them, in the belief that he could get blacklegs from abroad. "The Deputation then left Mr. M'Kenzie to his Dream", and called 20 men out; after four days the employer conceded the point.[8] The bookbinders' minutes, in particular, indicate the importance of vigilance over working practices, especially with the widespread introduction of female labour into binding processes. In one such case, typical of many throughout the period, three men struck, "attempting to resist an infringement of their rights and privileges" through the encroachment of female labour.[9] Vigilance over working practices, especially over work allocation, was, of course, germane to the earnings of the piece-working compositor. Here too there were "small local strikes where there have been disagreements arising as to the variation from the scale of pay".[10] The compositors' workshop controls were institutionalised in the Chapel.[11] This body, consisting of all the journeymen in a particular office or shift, had, by long established tradition, a general responsibility for maintaining order and seeing to the proper conduct of the work. In

8 Ibid., loc.cit.

9 Edin.B., Bookbinders Consolidated Union, Minutes, 25 Nov., 1874.

10 R.C.Lab., group C, PP 1893-4 XXXIV, Q.23198 (secretary, Edin. Typo. Soc.).

11 For the importance of the Chapel, see: A.J.M. Sykes, "A Trade Union Workshop Organisation", Sociology, 1, 1967; Child, op.cit., pp.35-9.

the nineteenth century this tradition of workshop self-organisation became incorporated into the trade union structure: the rules of the Typographical Society provided that Chapels were to try to settle issues at workshop level, and failing that, to report to the Society officials.[12] Chapel meetings "may be called at any time either to preserve the employer's property, or to settle a dispute regarding prices to be paid for special kinds of work."[13]

The importance in artisan life of the occupational community is thus reflected in industrial relations. The trade unionism of the skilled worker was embedded in craft tradition and the defence of trade custom, and this no doubt reflected the perception of class interests and relationships. There were, however, important aspects of trade union activity which implied a wider class consciousness. As workers became aware of their bargaining strength they tried to enforce avowedly new principles - such as the nine hour day - to which the norms of established trade custom were irrelevant. The formation of the Trades Council is closely associated with this process. Although its influence may have been rather limited at this period - only one union, the tailors, were continuously affiliated during the years 1859-73[14] - participation in the Council must nonetheless have brought a few activists in contact with men in other trades. And there is, as we might expect, a degree of overlap between the personnel of trade unionism and that of other artisan institutions. Two of the founders of St. Cuthbert's and an officer of the Mechanics' Library were at various times delegates on the Trades Council; while its regular meeting place, Buchanan's Temperance Hotel, is perhaps an indication of its ties with the milieu of working class "respectability".[15]

[12] Edin. Typo. Soc., Rules, 1892, Webb C.81.xv-xvi.

[13] Ballantyne Press, op.cit., p.150. [14] MacDougall, op.cit., p.xxi.

[15] Ibid., pp. xxiii, xxv, xli.

The Council originated, it would seem, in the agitation for Saturday half-holidays in the early 1850's.[16] The earliest extant minutes (from 1859) certainly indicate its part in encouraging the demand for the nine hour day. Thus it organised a meeting, attended by 2000, which: "calls upon all Tradesmen whether organized or not to come forward and assist the Masons and Joiners so that the Rights of Labour may not be overpowered by the weight of Capital."[17] Again, in the second great wave of the nine hours' movement, the Council organised a meeting at which Burnet, the leader of the nine hours' struggle in the Tyneside engineering trades, declared: "It was not only for themselves they were fighting, but for the working men throughout the whole country. (Applause)"; soon afterwards the Edinburgh engineering trades were themselves agitating for the nine hour day.[18]

These movements often resulted in large scale industrial disputes which contrast with the small local strikes that arise from "regulation by union rule". The masons were out for three months in 1861 when they won the nine hour day.[19] The printers' decision, taken at the "largest trade assemblage at which we have ever been present", to give notice for shorter hours and other demands led to a bitter struggle: a "powerful combination of local publishers" forced the men back on the employers' terms, following the organised introduction of blackleg labour.[20] There is also some evidence of tension between local branches and the union executives. When a member of the Ironmoulders' executive visited Edinburgh in an attempt to persuade the District to lift their overtime ban, he got a "warm

[16] Ibid., p.xv. [17] T.C. Minutes, 13 March, 1861.
[18] Ibid., 5, 24 Oct., 1871. [19] N.S., 2 March, 5 June, 1861.
[20] S.T.C., Dec., 1872; Bookbinders C.U., Trade Circular, March, 1873.

reception"; and it was only reluctantly that the executive allowed the District to join the local joint short time committee.[21] A critic of the A.S.E. executive alleged that they had forbidden a local joint committee, and generally allowed the union to fall into a "stupor" evidenced by the engineers' sluggishness on the nine hours' question, despite their self-image as the "aristocracy of the working classes".[22]

The formation of local employers' organisations was both cause and effect of the spread of industrial militancy. The builders', printers' and engineers' organisations all date from the 1860's.[23] The engineers' association was said to have been formed specifically to resist the demand for shorter hours and was accused of operating a black list: "No such sights as an employer fraternising at any of our social meetings, &c., with the workmen of his own and other establishments, as we see at the meetings of other trades."[24] Given this tendency, and the growing scale of industry and concentration of ownership, conflicts resulting from "regulation by union rule" could escalate. The alteration of work allocation arrangements at the Scotsman newspaper led to a serious strike and eventually to the closing of the office to union members.[25] The Trades Council resolved that "all who have taken any interest in the matter cannot but see that it is intended as a representative struggle, being a blow aimed it is conceived at Trades Unionism in general, and will if successfull be followed by other employers in other Trades", and called on all trade unionists in the city to support a subscription for the strikers.[26] In 1875 the Council expressed concern at the "aggressive action of employers, federated or otherwise,

[21] A.I.M.S., EC Minutes, 30 May, 1870, 22 Nov., 1871.

[22] Letter in Ref., 13 Feb., 1869.

[23] N.B., 6 March, 1861; S.T.C., Dec., 1866; letter in Ref., 9 Jan., 1869.

[24] Ref., loc.cit. [25] MacDougall, op.cit., p.341 n.

[26] T.C. Minutes, 24 Sept., 1872: spelling and syntax as in original.

in the matter of wages and hours", and took steps to encourage mutual aid in resisting cuts.[27] The severe depression of the later 1870's encouraged the engineering employers to attack the gains made in the preceding period of boom; a 54 hour week was introduced, despite the formation of a 51 Hours Defence League, "especially to embrace the large number of unskilled labourers enjoying the great Priviledge and should be allowed the opportunity to defend it."[28]

The attempt to obtain marked improvements in wages or hours, and to resist the concerted attacks of organised employers (especially with regard to hours) could thus involve large scale industrial confrontations and a growth of solidarity across the sectional boundaries of craft unionism. The dubious legal status of workers' combinations, and the ideological opposition of the powerfully entrenched economic individualism of the middle class were likewise important to the growth of a sense of class identity. It was here that the artisan was likely to dissent most sharply and explicitly from middle class ideology. The legal and ideological standing of trade unions was a recurring concern of the Trades Council. It organised a meeting in 1859 to refute the views of Adam Black, the Whig MP for the city, and was later closely involved in the nation-wide agitation for the repeal of anti-union statutes; it was on this issue that the alliance of middle class Liberalism and working class organisations showed most signs of strain.[29]

The debate about the legitmacy of unions is also of interest for the light it throws on the meanings of trade unionism, the values and motives of union leaders and activists.[30] One important

27 Ibid., 9 Feb., 31 March, 1875.

28 Ibid., 12 Sept., 1878: spelling and syntax as in original.

29 Ibid., 11 Nov., 1859; MacDougall, op.cit., pp.xxxii-v.

30 For discussion of this topic with reference to modern American unions, see: W. Spinrad, "Correlates of Trade Union Participation", American Sociological Rev., 25, 1960.

legitimation of collective action undoubtedly derived from the values of craft solidarity, which have already been briefly discussed.[31] The articulation of these solidaristic values in more generalised and abstract terms could broaden the defence of the craft into a critique of middle class individualism:

> "'A man can do what he likes with his own'. Before this plea can be held as tenable, it must be seen how what any man calls his own has been acquired ... independent of the joint-assistance and support of co-labourers ... A community or a body of any kind is not comprised in a single member ... No man within the pale of any trade or profession whatever is, in himself, a whole, but merely a member of it, and is, and has become what he is, only through and by his connection with it; ..."[32]

This remarkable passage from the Typographical Circular calls to mind Thompson's comment on the reproduction of "the language of 'social man' of the philosophical Enlightenment" in the rules of artisan organisations.[33] Another strand of argument attempted to answer the middle class ideologues within the terms of their own economic theory. Thus it was argued that "superabundance of labour", rather than "improvident habits", was at the root of social problems, and that restriction of labour-supply was "a matter of self-defence".[34] Sometimes, as in the North Briton commenting on the masons' strike, the argument could take on a blunter and more militant tone: "Labour is the commodity the

[31] See above, ch.5, sect.i, and the beginning of the present ch.
[32] S.T.C., May, 1858.
[33] Thompson, Making of the Working Class, p.461.
[34] S.T.C., Feb., 1859.

operative has to sell, and if he has the power he has the perfect right to sell as small a quantity as he thinks proper without giving any reason in the shape of an apology for so doing."[35]

Underlying all these arguments was the conviction of a natural opposition of interest between workers and employers, the assertion of an ethic of solidarity. The North Briton's columnist "John Wilkes" condemned "base sneeking fellows" who "offer themselves ... at low wages":

> "Every trade, sir, has its own peculiar name for these good-for-nothing willing-to-work-for-anything characters, but perhaps the most expressive is that of shoemakers ... In the shoemaking trade, those who go in and take the work of men who are out on strike for an advance of wages are called scabs, and woe be to the outcast whose conduct brings that terrible name upon him."[36]

The blackleg printer was caricatured in a satirical "situations vacant" column:

> "Accustomed to use the Knob Stick. Is a Firm Believer in the Identity of the Interests of Capital and Labour - especially of Capital. Objects to having his Wages Raised by the Agency of Combination ... A strict Tee-totaler, if required. Prayer Meetings attended Gratis."[37]

35 N.B., 20 March, 1861.

36 Ibid., 10 March, 1866.

37 S.T.C., May, 1869. "Knob stick" was a term for blackleg, and is here a pun on "stick", the term for a tool of the compositor's trade.

Together with this widely diffused ethic of solidarity went a view of collective action as the essential defence of the rights of working people. In this perspective the struggle over wages and working conditions was a particular manifestation of a more general movement of resistance to every kind of oppression which workers might suffer at the hands of their employers and social superiors. In the mid-Victorian period this was often enough formulated in terms of the democratic ideology of popular radicalism. Thus the Trades Council saw the London building employers' "document" as "an unjust and tyranical interferance with their rights as citizens and Freemen."[38] In 1865 the Typographical Circular drew an analogy between the political rights placed on the agenda by Gladstone, and the workers' rights in the sphere of employment:

> "If we have a right to a vote in the administration, we have in consequence the right to a great deal more in other directions. We are no more masters and servants, but equals, having the right, as those above us have, to regulate as we think proper when we shall work, how long we shall work, and to put our own value upon what we sell; ..."[39]

The labour laws, as the secretary of the Associated Joiners told the Royal Commission, were resented "more as ... a moral wrong", than for the direct hardships they inflicted.[40] As a letter in the Typographical Circular put it: "every true unionist may well feel

38 T.C. Minutes, 4 Oct., 1859: spelling as in original. The "document" referred to was an undertaking not to join a trade union.

39 S.T.C., Aug., 1865.

40 R.C. on Labour Laws, Second Report, PP 1875 XXX, Q.212; cf. A. Anderson, "The Political Symbolism of the Labour Laws", Society for the Study of Labour History Bull., 23, autumn, 1971 (abstract of paper).

proud of his principles when he knows that taking higher ground than that of desiring to fix the price and hours of labour, trades-unionism aspires to free the British workman from an indignity under which he has so long groaned; and, if not investing him with the social and political equality which he so earnestly desires - and to which, according to high authority, he is so fully entitled - at least cutting from his neck one of the most degrading badges of his serfdom."[41]

We therefore find the same claim to social recognition, the same stress on the independence and moral dignity of the worker, as we traced in the artisan's aspirations outside the workplace. Often, it should be noted, this connected with the argument from economic theory and the freedom of contract. The "equal freedom of capital and labour" was implied by the political economists themselves.[42] The Typographical Circular noted with approval the disappearance of testimonials from employers, as betokening "the vigorous expansion of ideas of self-reliance and self-respect". "A fair field and no favour is now all that is asked by average workmen in the struggle for existence; a right manly sentiment, and one which is bound to yield a better return morally and materially than was to be got when they went about cringing for work on the strength of a bit of paper, or ate their bread per favour of a patron."[43]

It must, however, be remembered that those closely involved in sophisticated ideological discussion were an articulate minority, even of union members; and the men organised in unions were themselves at this period a minority in every trade.[44] Intellectualised

[41] S.T.C., Sept., 1864. [42] Ibid., May, 1865. [43] Ibid., July, 1872.

[44] See below, table 9.1 for estimates of unionisation. Only the printers had more than half the estimated eligible membership organised in 1871, and they suffered a collapse after the strike of 1872-3.

legitimations must be seen against the background of day-to-day experience of industrial relations and trade solidarity. The practical ethic of solidarity and the rather diffuse view of collective action as the essential defence of the worker's rights were probably the most widely influential elements in the trade union ideology, and certainly played a part in the formation of working class cultures. We must, however, again emphasise a point already made from another angle: that the world view of working people might be incoherent, fragmented and ambivalent. It is for this reason that the experience of collective action in the employment situation must be set beside those other aspects of artisan life explored in earlier chapters.

Patterns familiar from other contexts are also discernible in the political activities and attitudes of working men. The argument for franchise extension on the grounds of the "respectable" working man's claim to a stake in the community was, indeed, one of the great clichés of the age. Thus at a Reform meeting in 1859, Alexander Fraser (a blacksmith, and future secretary of the Trades Council) referred to the "growing virtue and intelligence of the working classes".[45] The theme of working class "respectability" - and of the class tensions associated with it - recurs in the report of the 1866 Reform demonstration: "cabs and open carriages, with cynical or simply curious 'swells', were driven slowly past to have, as they said, a view of 'the great unwashed', who were, however, as was at once evident, not only washed but dressed - and that handsomely, too, for the occasion; and it will be unanimously allowed, even by those who habitually sneer at the working classes, that a

[45] N.B., 16 March, 1859.

better dressed procession of working men was never seen."[46] In popular politics, as in other kinds of community activity, the claim to "respectability" must be seen as a source of class identity and class tension.

The political behaviour and aspirations of working class activists must be set in the context of the class structure of the city, and the emergence of political groupings since the early nineteenth century.[47] The key development here was the attack by a Liberal coalition, under the leadership of the merchant Duncan McLaren, on "the combined forces of Whiggery and Toryism", representing the entrenched local elites of "Church, Army, Physic, Law".[48] McLaren's victory in the 1865 election was widely attributed to the inclusion in the electorate of new social strata, resulting from improved registration, and to a canvass by McLaren of this "new" electorate in the poorer quarters of the city.[49] After 1867, most politically active working men (for example, members of the Trades Council) seem to have acted in alliance with the radical wing of the local Liberals.

The Reformer, founded in 1868, represented this conjuncture of political forces. Edited by Bailie Lewis, an ex-journeyman master shoemaker, radical and temperance advocate, its stated policy was to agitate for extension of the 1867 borough franchise to the counties, give coverage to the labour movement and space to its spokesman, and "represent the opinions of Advanced Liberals".[50]

[46] Ibid., 21 Nov., 1868. [47] My account draws heavily on Williams, op.cit

[48] J. S. Mackie, The Life and Times of Duncan McLaren, vol.II, London, 1888, p.27.

[49] Williams, op.cit.

[50] Ref., 15 Aug., 1868. For Lewis, see MacDougall, op.cit., p.235 n. The intention of giving coverage to the labour movement was largely carried out as the numerous citations above from the paper indicate: and letters suggest it was read by active trade unionists.

It thus represented that current of opinion which hoped that the Reform Bill could be made the prelude to a more sweeping attack on entrenched privilege; working class organisations were regarded as potentially a part of the broad radical progressive movement. The Commons was described as still, despite the Reform Bill, the "Second House of the Aristocracy" and the people were urged to send representatives of "their own class".[51]

Vincent has argued that in particular communities Radical-Liberalism reflected the demand for social recognition of those excluded by entrenched local elites.[52] Many statements by Edinburgh radicals can be seen in this light. The North Briton, for example, complained of "the great tendency in certain quarters of our city to confine all public arrangements to a small section of the community."[53] The catch-phrase "class legislation" summed up many of these feelings of social exclusion, as well as more material grievances. We have already noted the symbolic aspect of the labour laws. The land laws, and a whole range of statutes that appeared to endorse some principle of inequality were regarded in a similar light; the Contagious Diseases Acts, for example, were described as "class legislation".[54] The Reformer regarded further franchise extension as the prelude to "impartial legislation".[55] The aspirations of working class radicals are further illuminated by the response of the local radical press to the Paris Commune and the British republican movement that emerged at about the same period. The North

[51] Ibid., 22 Aug., 1868.

[52] J. Vincent, The Formation of the Liberal Party, 1857-68, London, 1966, pt.II, esp. pp.76-82.

[53] N.B., 18 March, 1871.

[54] See, e.g., N.B., 10 May, 1871; Ref., 23 April, 1870. The Contagious Diseases Acts provided for compulsory registration and medical examination of prostitutes in garrison towns; apart from the important moral objections to this, it was felt that the power of compelling registration would be abused.

[55] Ref., 15 Aug., 1868.

Briton, although it had initially been hostile to the insurgents, was quick to take offence at the argument against the Commune on the ground of its leaders' social class.[56] The Reformer, while opposing "the wealthy monopolists who grind the faces of the poor with their class legislation", also opposed "the Socialist sentiment which would confiscate the property of the industrious, well-doing artisan for the benefit of his lazy and profligate fellow-labourer."[57] Here, too, the attitudes of the wealthy classes provoked a shift of editorial line; and the columnist "Old Radical" emphasised the differing opinions of the "democracy" and the "aristocracy and wealthy classes".[58] A letter in the same paper referred to the "strong feeling" of working men in favour of republicanism; six months later a republican club was in existence in the city.[59] This evidence, together with the industrial militancy of the same period and the growing feeling about the labour laws, does suggest a widening gulf between working class radicalism and the middle class Liberalism of men like McLaren.

The characteristic objects of class hatred seem, however, to have belonged to the old radical demonology: monarchy, aristocracy, church, militarism. Thus the North Briton concluded from a series of articles on "Republics - Ancient and Modern" that monarchy was synonomous with "class legislation" - exemplified in Britain by the land and game laws.[60] Bailie Lewis, lecturing on "Capital, Labour and Wages", advocated the recognition of trade unions and collective bargaining, to avoid "misunderstanding"; the employer

[56] N.B., 15 Feb., 29th March, 8 April, 1871.
[57] Ref., 25 March, 1871. [58] Ibid., 6, 13 May, 1871.
[59] Ibid., 8 April, 11 Nov., 1871. [60] N.B., 10 May, 1871.

was "an organiser of labour", whose interests largely coincided with those of his workers: "The true capitalists viewed in relation to our national industry may with comparatively few exceptions be regarded as those who hold possession of the soil".[61] Lewis, as an employer trying to cement a political alliance with trade unionists, clearly had an axe to grind. But this view of the "aristocracy" as the true exploiting class seems nonetheless to have provided an intelligible analysis of society for politically conscious artisans. In 1884, for example, a Trades Council sub-committee listed the causes of industrial depression as the land laws, the drink traffic, foreign tariffs and over-production (in that order); and a year later one delegate (a tailor) spoke of the "manner in which the land of the country is tied up in the hands of comparatively few persons" and the "vast and increasing number of non-producers who live upon the wealth produced by the Industrial Class", advocating agrarian reform to stave off "social revolution".[62] The tendency to adopt this image of society must also be seen in its local context. The blanket term "aristocracy" may have applied loosely, in the minds of working men, to all those groups of the wealthy upper middle class who appeared to dominate local affairs - a stratum, it should be noted, which was in Edinburgh not at all synonomous with the employers of industrial labour. The recruitment to the working class of Highland and Irish immigrants may, moreover, have added a dimension of personal experience to the sense of agrarian injustice.

There are thus signs of a growing class polarisation in local politics after the Second Reform Bill. But the political ideology

[61] Ref., 1 March, 1873. The lecture was organised by the Trades Council.
[62] T.C. Minutes, 2 Dec., 1884, 29 Dec., 1885.

of working class activists seems still to have been contained within a tradition of popular radicalism which had become, in practice, a subordinate part of mid-Victorian Liberalism. It is important to remember that the Liberal party was a relatively loose electoral coalition - a coalition which in Edinburgh had emerged as recently as the election of 1865. In the 1870's radical artisans were not attaching themselves to a monolithic, tightly organised party with fixed characteristics, but rather to an emergent movement whose nature they might hope to influence. Mid-Victorian Liberalism, then, was as much a "movement" as a political party in the conventional sense; and its local manifestations might have only the most tenuous connections with the opinions or activities of the men it sent to Westminster.[63] The main integrative element appears to have been the name of "Gladstone - vanguard of liberty unshaken", as a political versifier in the Reformer called him.[64] Urging the Trades Council to welcome Gladstone to the city in 1879 one delegate (a joiner) described him as "a Statesman of great Intellectual and moral worth, and in doing Honour to such a Statesman they would at the same time be Honouring themselves."[65] Here again political attitudes may shed some light on social aspirations: the key to Gladstone's extraordinary popularity with sections of the working class seems to be his readiness to appeal to the moral sense of ordinary people, to admit them, at a symbolic level, to membership of the "political nation".[66]

The Radical-Liberalism of politically active working men involved the same process of bargaining, the same negotiated accommodation between middle class elites and relatively autonomous working

[63] See Vincent, op.cit. [64] Ref., 26 Sept., 1868.
[65] T.C. Minutes, 22 July, 1879.
[66] Vincent, op.cit., pp.216-7, 233-4.

class organisations, as we saw operating in the institutions of artisan "self improvement". On a number of local issues - the agitation to enforce the Factory Acts in Edinburgh, the question of the allocation of educational endowments to found schools for the sons of the wealthy, the opening of Princes Street gardens to the public - the radical Town Councillors, who seem to have been mainly businessmen, worked with the Trades Council.[67] Sometimes, though not invariably, they came to electoral arrangements; while in parliamentary elections the interviewing of candidates became a regular part of the Council's business, and generally led to the conclusion that working men should vote Liberal.[68] The striving for recognition of their corporate status seems to be reflected in the Trades Council's attitudes to notable political figures: they elected McLaren, and the current and past Lord Advocates honourary presidents, and welcomed Gladstone and Bright on their visits to the city.[69]

This attachment to Liberalism was, however, subject to certain strains. The issue of direct working class representation on local bodies was one source of tension. Thus, when the Advanced Liberals apparently changed their minds about running jointly with a Trades Council nominee (William Paterson of the Associated Joiners) in the municipal election of 1869, the Council condemned "political jugglery", and resolved: "That this Council in future connect itself with none of the present pollitical Parties but confine itself to the representation of labour."[70] The issue of the labour laws was

67 T.C. Minutes, 11 Dec., 1868, 7 March, 23 Sept., 1873. For the social background to Town Councillors, Marwick, op.cit.

68 See, e.g., T. C. Minutes, 18 March, 1873, 30 March, 1880.

69 Ibid., 12 Jan., 1869, 16 Oct., 1868, 14 Oct., 1879.

70 Ibid., 22, 26 Oct., 1869: spelling as in original. The Council nonetheless continued to give support to Liberal or Radical candidates: e.g., above, footnote 69.

also disruptive. McLaren, "as an economist and Free Trader" declined to support the trade unionists' demands, and was "denounced as a 'traitor'" at a large demonstration in 1873.[71] These conflicts may, however, have been rather more complex than a simple split between working class radicals and the middle class Liberalism of men like McLaren. The issue of the labour laws was raised at the Advanced Liberals' AGM by Andrew Dewar (blacksmith, a former secretary of the Trades Council);[72] it is not altogether clear what attitude the radical businessmen took - though Lewis, as we have seen, produced a sophisticated argument to reconcile his position as an employer with his trade union alignments - but at any rate disenchantment with McLaren does not seem to have driven a wedge between the trade unionists and the Advanced Liberals. Social distinctions within the middle class - reflected in the difference between McLaren and the more radical politics of smaller businessmen - may be important here.[73] It must again be borne in mind that parties at this period were rather loosely articulated political structures. In opposing the exclusion of working men from the party ticket, or the attitudes of Liberal "economists" to trade unionism, trade unionists could remain within the broad ideological and organisational framework of Radical-Liberalism - if the tensions under discussion had any effect, it was probably to reinforce the "anti-political" attitudes of some trade unionists, rather than to produce a political revolt against the hegemony of Liberalism.

The organised working class thus constituted a relatively autonomous section of the Liberal movement; indeed the hegemony exerted

[71] Mackie, op.cit., p.53. [72] Ref., 6 Sept., 1873.

[73] Mackie, loc.cit., states incorrectly that the Advanced Liberals were formed specifically to oppose McLaren on this issue; it is clear from the files of the Reformer that the Advanced Liberals represented an alignment that had existed in some form or other under that label since 1868, if not earlier.

through that movement rested precisely on the recognition of the moral independence of the artisan and the organisational autonomy of his institutions. This pattern of political relationships is, of course, very similar to that found in other, less overtly "political" community activities.[74] In both respects a growth of relatively autonomous institutions went together with a clear sense of class identity; yet it was effectively contained, through a process of bargaining and accommodation, within a local social order dominated by the middle class.

[74] See above, ch.7.

CHAPTER 9

THE EMERGENCE OF A LABOURIST WORKING CLASS MOVEMENT, 1884-1900

The attachment of industrially and politically organised workers to Liberalism had, by the end of the century, been firmly challenged. The 1880's and 90's saw important changes in the trade union movement and in working class political aspirations.[1] It has been argued that these tendencies represented "a revision of judgement" on the part of active trade unionists of an essentially pragmatic character, rather than any significant shift in ideological perspectives.[2] I would argue, however, that there were related changes in working class life and culture, and that the influence of ideology - especially that of the socialist propaganda - cannot be ignored: in short, that there was a discernible change in the consciousness of class among working men. As a socialist commentator of the period remarked:

> "If there is one feature of the Labour Movement more distinctive than another, it is the widespread spontaneity of the revolt against the tyrannous class monopolies, DUE TO A MORAL AND SPIRITUAL UPHEAVAL, a striving among the people for liberty to live a better, freer, and nobler life than is possible for them as wage-slaves in a capitalist society. And it is this struggle for better opportunities of life, NOT FOR THEMSELVES ONLY but for

[1] There is, of course, no single date that marks the origin of these tendencies; but I will be mainly concerned with political developments from the adhesion of the Scottish Land and Labour League to the S.D.F. (1884), and with industrial developments of the later 1880's and 90's. For an outline of the organisational vicissitudes of socialism in Edinburgh, see below, footnote 61.

[2] D. W. Crowley, "The Origins of the Revolt of the British Labour Movement from Liberalism", PhD., London, 1952, abstract. This thesis is, however, an important contribution, especially for its emphasis on the changing industrial situation of skilled labour.

their class and for society, that has caused the series of social, industrial and political struggles known as the Labour Movement."[3]

Given the general theme of this study, I am particularly concerned with the role of the skilled workers in this "upheaval", and its bearing on the problem of the labour aristocracy. To what extent did the new patterns of class formation reflect the organisation and political consciousness of newly organised strata of the working class, regarded by the upper stratum with hostility or indifference, to what extent was there a shift in the situation and attitudes of that upper stratum themselves? Before trying to answer these questions it is necessary to specify more clearly the nature of the changes under discussion. In the title of this chapter, and throughout the text, I use the word "labourist" as a shorthand expression for the form of class organisation and consciousness which was, it seems to me, the typical outcome of the ferment of the 1880's and 90's. "Labourist" ideology is perhaps best regarded as the political expression of the "trade union consciousness" of British workers: "the conviction that it is necessary to combine in unions, fight the employers, and strive to compel the government to pass necessary labour legislation, etc."[4] In a sense, of course, a particular form of "labourist" outlook had emerged in the 1860's and 70's - a form closely related to the situation and aspirations of the mid-Victorian artisan. The term has been reserved for this chapter, however, because of the distinctive features of the

[3] Labour Chronicle, Nov., 1894. This paper, "a local organ of democratic socialism", was a joint venture of the socialist groups in Edinburgh, appearing for a year from October, 1894.

[4] V. I. Lenin, What Is To Be Done?, Selected Works, Vol.1 (3 vols.), Moscow, 1967, p.122.

1880's and 90's: it was this period that saw consistent attempts to transmit class ideology to the lower strata of the working class, and to create a broadly based political and industrial class movement. The growing support among organised workers for a political programme of local and national welfare legislation - free school meals, the eight hour day, old age pensions, etc. - was a further distinctive feature of the period. Since the various socialist groups played some part in mobilising sections of the working class and forming the labourist programme and ideology, it is necessary to clarify the relationship between labourism and socialism. I use the term "socialist" to refer to persons or organisations advocating collective ownership and control of the means of production, which they generally believed to imply a social order radically different from that of industrial capitalism. The labourist outlook, on the other hand, looks to the defence of working class interests within the existing society, which may, of course, be thought to demand welfare measures of the kind generally favoured by socialists, or even state ownership of particular industries. The distinction tended, in the historical circumstances of the late nineteenth century, to become blurred. The class conscious and egalitarian rhetoric of the labourist tradition certainly derived partly from the activities of the socialists, while the vague term "collectivism" was applied to any predisposition to favour public intervention in the workings of the economy: "any departure from Manchester practice in Cobden's day could genuinely appear indistinguishable from socialism".[5] The distinction is nonetheless a real one, and many socialists were themselves aware of it. I will argue that the

[5] E. J. Hobsbawm, "The Fabians Reconsidered", Labouring Men, op.cit., p.267.

political changes of the period - and much of the subsequent character of British labour politics - should be analysed in terms of a convergence of socialist agitation with developments that predisposed wider circles of active trade unionists to the adoption of a labourist-reformist perspective. It is thus necessary to establish at the outset the difference between these two sets of forces. For although both, in Edinburgh, involved the artisan stratum, they involved it in different ways and at different periods.

A number of changes in working class life, analysed in earlier chapters, might have some relevance to shifts in industrial and political attitudes. This was a period of rising real wages and consumption standards; and, although wage differentials did not narrow and may have widened, the cheapening of basic foodstuffs may nonetheless have brought unskilled workers and less favoured sections of the skilled trades above a consumption "threshold" that gave them access to goods and services that had hitherto been the prerogative of the aristocracy of labour.[6] The improved position of labour, as well as structural change in industry, may also, it is worth noting, have made for greater homogeneity within the skilled trades: the "career ladder" of skilled labour, and the characteristically "petty bourgeois" fear of falling off it, may thus have become a less marked feature of artisan life.[7] Cyclical unemployment, on the other hand, possibly became heavier; while technical innovation certainly appeared to pose a threat to the security of some skilled workers.[8]

[6] Hobsbawm has argued that the cheapening of consumer goods "decreased the abnormal advantages of higher wages": "Trends in the British Labour Movement", ibid., p.325.

[7] For the "career ladder", see above, ch.6, sect.ii - which also suggests the movement into non-manual occupations became rather less common.

[8] For evidence about economic conditions, see above, ch.3.

Changes in industrial structure also affected the work situation of skilled labour.[9] In engineering, for example, the 1890's saw a new wave of machine tool innovation, speeding up the trend to greater specialisation and precision and encouraging the rationalisation of labour-use and work-flow.[10] In printing the linotype and monotype type-setting machines appeared at the same period - at first mainly in news work where speed was at a premium. The capital cost of the new machines led to a growing "cost consciousness", reflected in the concern of the Linotype Users' Association and the British Federation of Master Printers with "scientific costing".[11] A well-informed article by the business manager of the Manchester Guardian stressed union opposition to work measurement and bonus schemes as an obstacle to the efficient use of the new machines; significantly, he diagnosed the weakness of managerial control in the composing department as the root problem of the industry.[12] In both printing and engineering there were, as we shall see, important disputes arising from mechanisation. And, in addition to any threat to the economic position of skilled labour, the increased size of capital investment encouraged employers to reorganise their plant and to introduce incentive systems, in ways which encroached on valued traditions of workshop autonomy.[13] Thus the S.T.A. Report for 1900 comments on the spread of mechanisation: "This Juggernaut Car is in the hands of the high priests of trade,

9 Crowley, op.cit., ch.4(c) draws attention to this otherwise neglected aspect.

10 Jeffries, op.cit., pp.122-5; Landes, op.cit., pp.309-14.

11 Child, op.cit., pp.164, 197-201. The Federation was formed in 1901.

12 G. B. Dibblee, "The Printing Trades and the Crisis in British Industry", Economic Jour., 1902.

13 Dibblee, ibid., p.13, notes with approval the higher earnings but more flexible working arrangements of American compositors; cf. Hobsbawm, "Custom, Wages and Work-load", op.cit., pp.358-63.

and the earth's feeble toilers must become its votaries, and submit their souls to be warped and their bodies crushed in the sacred cause of this fetish, which is dignified with the name of Progress."[14] In this context the socialist analysis of mechanisation and of the nature of work under capitalism must have provided a recognisable account of the industrial experience of the skilled worker.

Even in the absence of important technical innovations skilled workers might be affected by the growing scale of industry, closer managerial control and tighter work discipline. The Edinburgh masons in the 1880's complained that one man now had to do the work of three, the ironmoulders that "speed had so much improved and quality so much deteriorated".[15] In printing, even before the introduction of linotypes: "the previously fleet and graceful but now unfashionable compositor has to 'take a back seat', and make room for this latest novelty, the Rusher."[16] Changes in work organisation were also, of course, related to the growing size of business units, and concentration of ownership. The Associated Joiners Report for 1895 comments that: "Large syndicates are being formed by individuals who know nothing about the trade; they distribute their capital to drive men in the same way as steam is distributed to drive machinery."[17]

We may summarise the foregoing discussion by saying that pressures of structural change were, by the end of the century, impinging on the distinctive class situation of the Victorian artisan. There is also, it was suggested in chapter 5, evidence of the emergence at the same period of a more homogeneous working class community. Outside the employment situation the distinction between

[14] S.T.A., AR, 1900. [15] T.C. Minutes, 18 Nov., 1884.

[16] S.T.C., March, 1885. [17] Assoc. Joiners, AR, 1895.

the "superior" artisan and the remainder of the working class was becoming less marked - though it was still, it must be emphasised, of great importance. It is also possible that, as Hobsbawm suggests, the growth of a "status conscious" clerical lower middle class encouraged the artisan to identify more strongly with the manual working class (although the records of voluntary organisations which might provide evidence of this are not sufficiently comprehensive at this later period).[18] It is in relation to these changes in class situation and class culture that we must view the trade union and political developments to which I now turn.

In the first place, of course, there was a wave of unionisation among unskilled workers during 1888-90. In Edinburgh and Leith, gas workers, dockers, carters, tramwaymen, scavengers, building, foundry and brewery labourers became organised and made some notable gains.[19] It is, of course, true, as the revisionary work of recent historians has suggested, that this "new unionism" had precedents in earlier periods of boom and trade union expansion (especially the early 1870's) and that its gains were often ephemeral.[20] A defeat by three major firms badly weakened the Leith carters; and there, as in other ports, the union-breaking activities of the Shipping Federation made themselves felt.[21] An

18 Hobsbawm, "Trends in the Labour Movement", loc.cit.

19 T.C., AR, 1888-9, 1889-90; Minutes, 19 Feb., 1889.

20 See, e.g., A. E. P. Duffy, "The New Unionism in Britain, 1889-90: a reappraisal", EcHR 2nd ser., 14, 1961; H. A. Clegg, A. Fox, and A. F. Thompson, A History of British Trade Unions since 1889, vol.I, Oxford, 1964, ch.2.

21 T.C. Minutes, 25 Nov., 1890, 3 Feb., 1891.

attempt in 1893 to form or re-form a Labourers' Union failed.[22] The major office-bearers of the Trades Council up to 1900 included only one delegate (a pavior) from unions formed during 1888-90.[23]

Efforts to organise hitherto unorganised groups were nonetheless more widespread and persistent than at any previous period. And it is significant that the skilled unionists of the Trades Council played a prominent part in those efforts. An Organisation Committee was established in1888, and held a number of organising meetings; the Council seems, indeed, to have taken it upon itself to appoint its own members as officials for the Labourers' Union.[24] What is significant is not the immediate success or failure of this organising drive, but the consistency with which it was pursued. It suggests a fairly conscious attempt to widen the scope of class organisation: "when we speak of a trade we mean not only those workers who have served an apprenticeship to any given occupation to the exclusion of those whose occupations require comparatively little skill, but rather the word in its broader sense, by which ..., we mean all the workers who earn their bread by the exercise of one particular calling", the Labour Chronicle pointed out.[25]

Another notable feature of the period, which the concern of contemporaries and historians with the "new unions" has tended to obscure, is the growing strength of the craft unions. Table 9.1 indicates that the estimated proportion of union members in skilled trades is higher in the 1890's; in the earlier decades, although there is a peak in the boom year 1871, this is followed by a sharp fall in 1881. It is thus hard to determine to what extent figures for census years reflect a trend, and to what extent a cyclical

[22] T.C., AR, 1893-4.

[23] Analysis of main officers (pres., vice-pres., sec., treas., assistant sec.) listed in T.C., AR, 1888-1900.

[24] T.C. Minutes, 24 July, 1888, 19 March, 11, 25 June, 1889.

[25] Labour Chronicle, May, 1895.

fluctuation. For this reason more weight should be attached to the second part of the table, which gives the difference between the highest and lowest per centage unionised during the ten years around the 1881 and 1891 censuses and the five years preceding the 1901 census. This largely confirms the impression of a trend to more extensive and stable union organisations. The engineers are, surprisingly, an exception, having no consistent trend over the five censuses and the widest fluctuation for the five years to 1901. The strength of the A.S.E. would thus seem to have been more subject to cyclical movements than that of other craft unions.[26] (The problem of estimating the eligible membership from census categories was also most serious for the engineers; while the heterogeneity of the industry and the range of skilled occupations recruited by the A.S.E. may mean that the low overall figures conceal strong concentrations of union organisation in particular strategic plants and work-groups).

This increased density of organisation may be reflected in the "forward" movements of the 1890's, which were more widespread than any since the great save of union advance in the early 1870's. The Typographical Society gained improvements on the piece scale, following a demand for shorter hours in 1892; while the Press and Machinemen's Society gained shorter hours.[27]

[26] The highest membership for the whole period was in 1897; and the fall thereafter presumably reflects the lock-out of that year. Available figures for the other engineering union, the iron-moulders, unfortunately do not cover sufficient years to analyse fluctuations within ten-year periods. Their apparently stronger organisation may, however, reflect the fact that the eligible membership was much smaller and more occupationally homogeneous than that of the A.S.E.

[27] S.T.C., Feb., 1892. The movement was complicated by rivalries between the Press and Machinemen's Society and the Typo. Soc., which still claimed jurisdiction over machine rooms. See above, ch.3, sect.i., footnote 33, for the machinemen's secession. There is little material on the Press and Machinemen's Soc., but it seems to have been a strong craft union. Cf. above, ch.3, tables 3.7-9 for the earnings of compositors and machinemen at

Table 9.1.
Unionisation: Membership of Union Branches as Per Centage of Total Eligible (males aged 20 and more in appropriate census categories), 1861-1901

Estimated per centage organised:

	1861	1871*	1881	1891	1901
1. Printers	-	53	25	56+	44
2. Bookbinders	-	38 @	27.5	48.5	63
3. Joiners	22	36	28	37	-
4. Engineers ø	19	26	23	24	22
5. Ironmoulders ø	-	-	42	57	46

Fluctuations: difference between highest and lowest per centage organised for periods around census years

	1877-86	1887-96	1897-1901
Printers	13	21	4
Bookbinders	19	17	4
Joiners	23.5	15	-
Engineers	20	20	10.5

Source: Calculated from membership figures in union reports.

Notes:
* Estimated total eligible membership based on average of 1861, 81.
+ Includes Press and Machinemen's Society; 1881 and 1901 are underestimates as no figures for Machinemen are available.
@ 1872 membership, reflecting the amalgamation with the Union Society.
ø Includes Leith: Edin, and Leith shops extrapolated from membership by shops for ironmoulders.

Unions	Census Categories
1. Edin. Typo. Soc.	"printer".
2. Bookbinders C.U.	"bookbinder", "Paper ruler".
3. Assoc. Joiners, Amalgamated Joiners.	"joiner".
4. A.S.E., United Patternmakers.	"millwright", "engine and mach. maker", "fitter, turner" (1901: "patternmaker"). (Smiths and brass workers were eligible for the A.S.E., but had separate organisations in Scotland, and are excluded).
5. A.I.M.S. (also Central Ironmoulders Assoc. in 1901).	1901: "ironfounder"; otherwise: estimated from "iron manuf." (see above, ch.4, footnote 16).

In 1897 the bookbinders acted jointly with the lithographers to gain 52½ hours (the lithographers gained 50) and the Press and Machinemen's Society got 1s. rise (to 33s.) but failed to shorten hours, after seven months' strike.[28] In 1898 the Typographical Society demanded the abolition of piece work; although this agitation "ended in smoke", the attempt to take the bull by the horns is perhaps in itself a significant indication of a sense of increasing union power and the demand for the unified trade policy.[29] In the spring of 1895 the masons and joiners gave notice for the eight hour day, and the joiners struck unsuccessfully in the summer.[30] The most important dispute in the city arising from a "forward" movement was perhaps the Scottish rail strike of 1890-1, mainly for the ten hours' day, which collapsed after six weeks.[31] In the local context this is of significance as the first direct involvement of Edinburgh workers in a national dispute. The Trades Council organised support for the railwaymen, as well as expressing concern at the effect on employment generally of the stoppage of rail traffic, and calling for Board of Trade intervention.[32]

Craft unionists were also involved in a number of hard-fought defensive struggles, often against combinations of employers, which had a notable impact on trade union opinion in the city and contributed to a general atmosphere of industrial conflict. The most important of these disputes affected the compositors, shoemakers and engineers. In May, 1890, the Typographical Society were locked

28 Ibid., Feb., 1897, Feb., 1898.

29 Ibid., Feb., 1898, April, 1899. This was also a time of strong socialist influence in the Typo. Soc.: see below, footnote 45. For the importance of the piece and time-work question, and its divisive effects, see above, ch.3, sect.ii.

30 Labour Chronicle, April, July, Sept., 1895.

31 P. S. Bagwell, The Railwaymen, London, 1963, pp.143-7.

32 T.C. Minutes, 13 Jan., 1891.

out of the Scottish Leader news office after resisting an agreement binding compositors there to work the new linotypes "without having had an opportunity of ascertaining whether the rate fixed would be sufficient to remunerate them for their labour", and to remain with the firm for two years on completion of training on the linotype.[33] Matters came to a head when the employer - who had allegedly threatened "it would be fought out to the bitter end - aye, even in blood" - accused the men of going slow, and threatened to bring in matter set elsewhere: "Immediately thereafter the father of Chapel read Association rule 30, which stipulates that no matter is to be borrowed from or lent to an unfair office ... and ... it was decided to lay down their sticks." When the men refused to leave the premises they were forcibly evicted by police.[34]

Mechanisation also had an impact on industrial relations in shoemaking. The series of innovations which made possible the rise of a mass production factory industry also created problems of demarcation between this and the "quality" craft sector. In 1893 the Cordwainers' Society - the local union of craft shoemakers - protested that Messrs. Allan had introduced an output norm, and thus "transformed what was intended to be a time payment system into a piece system of a very unsatisfactory character."[35] Three years later the Cordwainers struck at the same firm against the use of members of the machine-workers' union - the Boot and Shoe Operatives - to do machine "jobbing" (i.e. repair) work - presumably at a lower rate.[36] The local employers' association, founded in 1890 then dissolved two years later, was revived at the initiative of Allan himself,

[33] Edin. Typo. Soc., Eviction of Trades Unionists from the Scottish Leader Office, leaflet, Webb, B.119.xxxvii.

[34] Ibid.; S.T.A., AR, 1890.

[35] Edin. Cordwainers Soc., To Messrs. James Allan, 1893, Webb B.119. xxiii.

[36] Edin. Master Boot and Shoemakers Association, Minutes, 9 Nov., 1896.

to "assist them to withstand the tyrannical demands of the Men's Society"; a general lock-out was then imposed, and the employers discussed such measures as the blacklisting of militants and "importing labour".[37] After nearly four months, following Board of Trade intervention, the employers agreed to fix rates for machine jobbing with the two unions jointly, and conciliation machinery was set up - a result, according to the Trades Council minutes, "entirely in the men's favour".[38]

The engineering lock-out of 1897-8 is notable, not only as another defensive craft union struggle involving technical change and a strong employers' organisation, but also as the second case where Edinburgh workers were engaged in a national dispute. Although the dispute began ostensibly with the London engineers' demand for shorter hours, it quickly developed into a nation-wide lock-out in which the main issue was "workshop control and the limits of trade union interference", especially with regard to manning arrangements on new types of machine; the settlement guaranteed the employers' right to "introduce ... any condition of labour" previously worked by any member anywhere of the unions party to the negotiations, and "to appoint the men they consider suitable".[39] The A.S.E. Edinburgh District reported that men returned to find labourers at their machines; while a Trades Council investigation substantiated allegations of victimisation of shop stewards, in breach of national agreement.[40] The lock-out was therefore a serious defeat - although it did not lead to any catastrophic decline in the engineer's

37 Ibid., 1890-2, 12, 21 Nov., 14, 21 Dec., 1896.

38 Ibid., 22 Feb., 4 March, 1897; T.C. Minutes, 9 March, 1897. And cf. above, ch.3, tables 3.7-9, for the earnings of Allans' workers in 1899.

39 Report on the Strikes and Lock-outs of 1897, PP 1898, LXXXVIII; Clegg et al, op.cit., p.167; and see Crowley, op.cit., ch.15(a) for an assessment of the dispute's significance.

40 A.S.E., Monthly Jour., Feb., 1898; T.C. Minutes, 8 March, 1898.

position - and one made all the more impressive by the reputation of the Amalgamated Engineers as a powerful, if somewhat over-cautious, craft union, and by the reputation of its members as a working class elite.

Important sections of the skilled labour-force were therefore engaged in large-scale industrial confrontations related to the impact of technical innovation and the threat to craft conditions and practices. These disputes were also important for their effect on trade union opinion outside the bodies directly involved. The Trades Council held a public meeting about the Leader affair, while the local socialists produced a leaflet on its significance - in which they no doubt made much of the paper's Liberal-Radical and Home Rule political outlook.[41] A committee was established to aid the shoemakers, on the ground that: "These Employers meant to deal a crushing blow at the Union."[42] Demonstrations and street collections were held for the railwaymen and engineers, and also for the shale workers and coal-miners of the region surrounding the city.[43]

These industrial experiences were an important factor in changing the outlook of skilled trade unionists. The socialists provided an interpretation of experience, a language for conceptualising class relations, that helped to sharpen and broaden the sense of class consciousness. The Typographical Society were "driven to socialism" by the struggle over linotypes.[44]

41 Edin. Typo. Soc., Eviction of Trades Unionists, op.cit.; Commonweal, 31 May, 1890. The Trades Council protested about several other incidents about the same period involving the use of police: T.C. Minutes, e.g., 12 March, 24 Dec., 1889.

42 T.C. Minutes, 15 Dec., 1896.

43 Ibid., 13 Jan, 1891, 4 Sept., 1894, 5 Oct., 1897; Commonweal, 10 Sept., 1887.

44 Labour Chronicle, May, 1895.

In 1898 they mandated their delegate to the Scottish T.U.C. (himself an S.D.F. member) to move a resolution calling for the collective ownership of "the land and the means of production, distribution and exchange", after "another lively tussle between theforces of the old and new unionism".[45] At the meeting in support of theshale workers in 1887, the socialists criticised the mealy-mouthed line which the Trades Council, "with the hankering after respectability which usually discredits it", had taken, and went on to hold their own meeting, which passed a resolution to the effect that it: "refuses to be content with the mere limitation of the robbery of labour, and declares that the abolition of wages-slavery is the real aim of the working-class movement."[46] At a more practical level, the Trades Council "had to acknowledge the services of several members of the Independent Labour Party" in collections for the miners five years later.[47] Those union activists who became consciously committed to the struggle for "the abolition of wages-slavery", rather than to more immediate labourist goals, were, no doubt, a small minority. The importance of the socialist propaganda was rather that it provided an analysis of the changing industrial experience of the artisan - of mechanisation, employers' combinations, and more generally, perhaps, of the loss of autonomy at work - and helped to determine his response: a broadening of class organisation and class consciousness.[48]

[45] S.T.C., June, 1898. The use of the phrase "new unionism" is interesting; it suggests that the term was often understood to mean a left-wing current within all unions, rather than identified with the unskilled unions formed after 1888.

[46] Commonweal, 10 Sept., 1887. The terms of this resolution indicate that socialists were aware of the distinction drawn above between socialism and labourism.

[47] T.C. Minutes, 11 Sept., 1894.

[48] Cf. E. J. Hobsbawm, "Trade Union History", EcHR, 2nd.ser., 20, 1967, pp.361-2 (review article discussing Clegg et al, op.cit.).

The convergence of socialist analysis with the aspirations and experiences of trade unionists became focused on two issues: the legislative eight hour day, and the drive for trade union unity to counter the increasing cohesion and organisation of the employers. In 1889 the Typographical Society and the joiners' branch both voted for the legislative eight hour day; the Press and Machinemen's Society were also on record as supporters of the measure by 1895.[49] Table 9.2, based on mandating of Trades Council T.U.C. delegates, shows that supporters of the measure include delegates of the building tades, some engineering trades, glass cutters and miners, while opponents include the craft workshop trades of shoemaking and cabinetmaking, the "elitist" engineers and the ironmoulders. The ironmoulders, who long held that an eight hour day was impractical in foundry work, finally swung round in 1899, when they decided to support only parliamentary candidates pledged to the eight hour day.[50] The Trades Council decided in favour of the measure in 1887, against in 1890, and thereafter more consistently in favour; in 1893 they took the possibly more radical step of cooperating with the socialists in a May Day demonstration.[51] Although we cannot generally tell to what extent delegates were mandated by their branches the alignments are nonetheless of some interest.

[49] S.T.C., June, 1889; T.C. Minutes, 7 May, 1889; Labour Chronicle, April, 1895. The vote in the Typo. Soc. was 239-110, from a membership of 752.

[50] T.C. Minutes, 5 Sept., 1899. This report is from the A.I.M.S.; the attitude of the Central Ironmoulders Assoc. (the smaller of the two ironmoulders' organisations in the city) at this date is unknown.

[51] Ibid., 16 Aug., 1887, 12 Aug., 1890, 28 March, 1893.

Table 9.2.
Movers and Opposers of Legislative Eight Hour Day at Edinburgh Trades Council, 1887-93.

Movers	Opponents
Masons, joiners, slaters Patternmakers, tinplate workers *, Glass cutters *, blind workers ø, miners ø	Painters Engineers, ironmoulders * Shoemakers, tailors, cabinetmakers, railwaymen

Source — Trades Council Minutes, meetings to mandate T.U.C. delegates (generally in August of the years mentioned).

Notes — Each delegate is counted only once, regardless of the number of separate occasions on which he moved or opposed the measure.

* Delegates with a record of activity in socialist organisations (the ironmoulders' delegate was presumably mandated by his branch against his personal views).

ø An association of inmates of the local Blind Asylum was represented on the Council, as were the miners of the nearby Lothians coalfield.

The role of employers' organisations at this period has already been mentioned. The defeat of the engineers, in particular, drove home the lesson. A letter to the Typographical Circular shortly after the end of the lock-out argued: "Employers are everywhere federating that they may annihilate trade unionism."[52] And the editorial of the following edition drew the conclusion that:

> "It is unnecessary to repeat arguments in favour of federation at the present time. Every workman in the country had convincing proof of its necessity in the great industrial struggle of 1897 ... If such struggles are to be prevented in the future, it will only be by an organisation which shall be able to preserve the balance of power and restore the status quo ante."[53]

[52] S.T.C., May, 1898. [53] Ibid, June, 1898.

The Clarion scheme for trade federation thus had a wide appeal as a defensive measure, just as the threats of depression and technological unemployment, and the failure of strong craft unions (in Edinburgh the masons and joiners) to obtain shorter hours, made trade unionists receptive to the socialist agitation for a legislative eight hour day. The Trades Council participated in a meeting with the local I.L.P. to discuss the Clarion scheme; the scheme was moved at the 1898 T.U.C. by the Edinburgh Typographical Society, and a year later a branch meeting of the bookbinders voted unanimously in its favour.[54] This part of the socialist line seems, indeed, to have appealed to moderate, as much as to militant opinion: "What is wanted is not strikes, but what will tend to prevent them", the Typographical Circular argued in support of the Clarion scheme.[55] This tendency was no doubt accentuated by the acepticism of many socialists (especially adherents of Hyndman's version of Marxism) as to the possible effectiveness of trade unions.[56] Thus Justice looked forward to a turn by the railwaymen to political organisation for the eight hour day should their strike fail, and later applauded the "common sense" of the men in accepting the employers' terms.[57] And the Labour Chronicle commented that: "Trades Unionists are beginning to see what

54 T.C. Minutes, 23 March, 1897; S.T.C., Aug., 1898; Bookbinders C.U. Minutes, 6 Oct., 1899.

55 S.T.C., June, 1898.

56 H. Collins, "The Marxism of the Social Democratic Federation", in Briggs and Saville (eds.), op.cit., pp.52-7, points out that the S.D.F.'s celebrated rejection of "palliatives" really referred to trade union gradualism; the use of working class political power to force reforms was specifically advocated. And cf. Hobsbawm, "Trade Union History", loc.cit.: as Hobsbawm points out, these views did not inhibit socialists from practical activity in trade unions, but they did inhibit the development of a coherent theory and strategy for that activity.

57 Justice, 3 Jan., 7 Feb., 1891.

Socialists have been preaching for years - that the strike is an obsolete weapon, and that the workers must use their political power to work out their social salvation."[58]

Before describing the political expression of this convergence between socialism and elements in the trade union movement something must be said of the nature of the socialist agitation itself. For skilled workers were also directly involved, as participants in that agitation. The first aspect of the early socialist movement is the great stress on propaganda, on trying to diffuse the socialist analysis of society and the critique of existing institutions (including those of the labour movement) by such direct means as open air meetings.[59] The second aspect is the attempt to gain representation in local government on an independent basis (whether under a "socialist" or "labour" label), and thus to attack the political monopoly of the existing parties and develop pressure for a local "working class programme" of reforms within the scope of local authority bodies.[60] The third is the formation of electoral coalitions, around a local programme (generally a watered-down one), with such bodies as the Trades Council. These three aspects are not intended to represent a chronological progression, nor are they necessarily mutually exclusive. Thus the Socialist League decided that its members could join the Independent Labour Party as individuals, "but ... the work of the League was education in Socialist principles"; and there was in fact a considerable overlap in the

[58] Labour Chronicle, April, 1895.

[59] The S.D.F., Socialist League, and I.L.P. all conducted regular propaganda activities, often jointly: see the columns of Justice and Commonweal, and Edin. B., I.L.P., Minutes.

[60] The importance of School Boards, as well as municipalities, should not be overlooked.

membership of the socialist organisations, at least in the early 1890's.[61]

Just as it was the changing experience of skilled labour, rather than the organisation of the unskilled that explained trade union interest in the reforms advocated by socialists, so the socialists themselves consisted predominently, though not exclusively, of artisans. According to a report in Commonweal, half of the 52 members of the Socialist League were "artisans", nine were students, and the remainder were "clerks, warehousemen, artists and one woman".[62] Two years later: "In Edinburgh, which is the most bourgeois town perhaps in Britain, we are able to get our halls filled Sunday after Sunday by the very best class of workmen."[63]

61 Commonweal, 11 May, 1889. The socialist organisations have a complicated history of secession and unification. The following outline is based mainly on the columns of Justice, Commonweal, and the Labour Chronicle, and on Greaves, op.cit. The Scottish Land and Labour League, formed sometime in the early 1880's was clearly socialist-inclined, and became in effect the local branch of the S.D.F., then of the Socialist League formed (Dec., 1884) by William Morris and other dissident seceders from the S.D.F.; an S.D.F. branch seems to have been re-formed in 1886 or 87. In practice locally the split meant little, and the two organisations worked together. There was also a rather shadowy body called the Scottish Socialist Federation (c1889-94) which seems to have been a united front, or possibly an amalgamation of the S.D.F. and Socialist League branches. The S.D.F. branch survived into the later 90's and the twentieth century. Keir Hardie's Scottish Labour Party was regarded as the counterpart of the English I.L.P., but had been formed some years earlier. The Party branch established in Edinburgh in 1892 was strictly speaking a branch of the Scottish L.P., and was variously referred to as the Scottish L.P., (Scottish) I.L.P., I.L.P., etc. For clarity I refer throughout to the S.D.F., Socialist League and I.L.P. to mean the local bodies which functioned as branches or affiliates of those organisations. The I.L.P. branches, of course, survived to the end of the century and beyond. Of publications cited in this chapter, Justice was the paper of the S.D.F., Commonweal of the Socialist League, Clarion was independent but linked to the I.L.P., and Labour Chronicle was a local joint venture of all the bodies mentioned.

62 Commonweal, Feb., 1885.

63 Ibid., 26 Feb., 1887.

The printing of leaflets for the Edinburgh S.D.F. was "done by a comrade with the aid of a small printing press (his own property) and during his leisure hours as a labour of love"; in the municipal elections of 1896, the committee rooms were renovated by "craftsmen of all kinds", and building work needed to convert the S.D.F.'s new premises was all done by branch members.[64] The tiny handful of working class socialist activists who can be identified include two printers, two bookbinders, two masons, two engineers and 12 other skilled workers; the three unskilled men include James Connolly and his brother (both carters) and the secretary of Leith dockers.[65] Although this suggests a preponderantly artisan membership, we should not ignore the significance of unskilled participation: no case was found of an unskilled worker playing a role, as important as that of Connolly in socialist politics, in the Reform movement of the 1860's or the Radical-Liberal politics it inaugurated.[66]

The evidence cited above does, however, suggest that the socialist groups may be regarded, from one point of view, as belonging to the milieu of the artisan stratum. And like other institutions of that milieu they were marked by a certain degree of participation by middle class individuals. A university socialist Society was founded in 1884 and invited Morris to the city, where his lecture on "Useful Work versus Useless Toil" was supported by "the

[64] Justice, 1 Sept., 1888, 14 Nov., 1896, 31 July, 1897.

[65] Based on references to committee members, speakers, candidates, etc. in the papers cited above, footnote 61, and in Edin.B., I.L.P., Minutes. Leith was considered in so far as Leith branches were not separate. The main source of occupational information was delegates' lists in T.C., AR; this no doubt biases the result to skilled trades - on the other hand, had there been a strong socialist element in the unskilled "new unions" we should have expected it to be reflected in their Trades Council representation.

[66] Connolly's Edinburgh years were important to local working class history in themselves, not merely in the light of his later career: see Greaves, op.cit., pp.35-37.

proleteriat in the gallery".[67] The Society also produced a pamphlet, Beauty for Ashes, which appears to reflect the influence of Morris; an excerpt appeared in the Typographical Circular.[68] The size and precise composition of the middle class elements is, however, obscure, as is the extent to which they gravitated to such separate bodies as the Fabians.

Both for artisans and for the middle class people to whom socialism made some appeal the movement has to be seen in relation to a wider cultural rebellion, which no doubt had complex generational and other origins that cannot be adequately discussed here. It is, however, important to note the self-conscious rejection of such catch-words as "respectability" which were seen by the socialists, in theory at least, as part of a system of oppressive and mystifying norms and values:

> "Edinburgh is indeed afflicted with a bowing of the knee to unworthy gods. The clergy obtain a ridiculous amount of respect, as do also savants with the academic hall-mark; but Mrs. Grundy claims the most devoted and the largest number of worshippers."[69]

The analysis in part two of this study of the values of the mid-Victorian artisan stratum suggests that this kind of cultural rebellion had implications, not only for the more "bohemian" fringes of the middle class, but also for artisans. And it is certainly true that the socialist movement of the 1880's and 90's formed a minority sub-culture within the working class, and thus played a pervasive part in its members' lives.[70] At a meeting of the Socialist League:

67 Commonweal, Feb., 1885; Justice, 29 March, 1884.

68 S.T.C., Nov., 1884. 69 Labour Chronicle, Oct., 1894.

70 Cf. D. Cox, "The Labour Party in Leicester", International Review of Social History, 1969; S. Yeo, "A Phase in the Social History of Socialism", Soc. for Study of Labour History Bull., 22, spring, 1971.

"Part of the evening was spent in discussing subjects of deep interest to Socialists, methods of propaganda, etc. Singing of revolutionary songs, as well as Scotch ones, helped also to pass the time pleasantly."[71]

The continuing popularity of Burns - in the context, no doubt, of a somewhat different interpretation - was one point of continuity with the mid-Victorian culture of artisan "respectability"; the League had meetings on "Socialism in Scottish Song" and the "Politics of Burns".[72] At an early meeting of the I.L.P. branch; "The meeting then became free and easy, and after a song by the Chairman, several... songs were sung by members of the Branch."[73]

The appeal of socialism to artisans must also be seen in the context of the movement's early development from the radical anti-aristocratic and republican ideology of an earlier period of working class politics. Thus one prominent I.L.P. member, Thomas Blaikie, (an ironmoulder by trade) was Treasurer of the Trades Council in 1871, Vice-President in 1882: "veteran of a hundred agitations, a veteran trade unionist, a land nationaliser, and now, still in the van, a Socialist and member of the I.L.P."[74] We will never know, of course, precisely how many men made this transition from the land question to socialism. It may have been a largely generational matter; for men formed in the Reform and Radical-Liberal movements of the 1860's and 70's anti-landlordism might be the end of their politics, while for younger men it might be only the beginning. Robert Banner, an Edinburgh bookbinder, was aged 12 at the time of the Reform Bill, became active in the land and republican agitations

[71] Commonweal, 7 April, 1888. [72] Ibid., 21 Jan., 1888, 25 Jan., 1890.
[73] Edin.B., I.L.P., Minutes, 26 Nov., 1892. [74] Clarion, 8 Sept., 1894.

of the 70's, then in the S.D.F., before moving to London where he was a member of the dissident group that left the S.D.F. to found the Socialist League.[75] The land question may also have been the main bridge between the politically conscious artisan and the poorer sections of the working class - especially the Irish. During the crofters' trial in 1888 the police were over-awed by large demonstrations outside the court.[76] James Connolly, of course, worked consistently to unify the national consciousness of the Irish poor with the class consciousness of British workers:

> "Perhaps they will realise that the Irish worker who starves in an Irish cabin, and the Scotch worker who is poisoned in an Edinburgh garret, are also brothers with one hope and one destiny. Perhaps they will also observe how the Liberal Government which supplies police to Irish landlords to aid them in their work of exterminating their Irish peasantry, also imports police into Scotland to aid Scotch mineowners in their work of starving the Scottish miners. Perhaps they will begin to understand that the Liberals and Tories are not two parties, but rather two sections of one party - the party of property."[77]

There is, however, little evidence that the socialists succeeded in integrating the Irish and their community organisations within a common movement, despite the importance of the land question in the 1880's and the efforts of Connolly in the 90's.

[75] Biographical sketch in Bookbinding Trades Jour., 1904.
[76] Justice, 28 Jan., 1888.
[77] Labour Chronicle, Nov., 1894.

The convergence that did occur was with sections of the industrially and politically organised skilled working class, rather than with the Irish poor. One aspect of this which has already been examined is the appeal of a socialist vocabulary as a way of understanding the industrial developments of the period, and, at a more practical level, of the measures advocated by the socialist current within the unions. It also had a political expression. The attempt to break the hold of the existing parties on local and parliamentary representation is associated especially with the formation and early activity of the I.L.P.; the most distinctive feature of the party was, indeed, its broad and eclectic ideological basis - though most of its members were undoubtedly socialists in some sense of the term - and its concentration on the immediate aim of creating a separate workers' party. A number of candidates stood for local bodies during the 90's, under a variety of auspices - there was considerable electoral cooperation between the I.L.P. and the S.D.F. at this time - and some of them received an appreciable share of the vote, though no seats on the Town Council were won.[78] The most notable success was not on the Town Council, but on the School Board, to which Alex Dickinson was elected on an Independent Labour platform - a success made all the more gratifying by the fact that the Trades Council decided at the last moment to contest the election on a "Lib-Lab" basis, specifically to prevent Dickinson's election, and lost.[79] The Trades Council had, in fact, long pursued a policy of "Lib-Lab" local representation, with some measure of success.[80] The mid-1890's

[78] See Marwick, op.cit., for municipal elections of this period.

[79] Clarion, 10 March, 7 April, 1894. The fact that School Board elections were city-wide and that several candidates were elected no doubt made it easier for a new party to break in by concentrated use of its voting-power .

[80] Marwick, op.cit.

seem to be a critical period in this respect, with a definite shift towards cooperation with the socialists, on an "independent labour" basis. This shift may well reflect the industrial experiences of these years, and the role of the socialists in providing a programme with which to respond to them; turnover in the personnel of the Council itself may also be important. At any rate the later 1890's saw distinctly more cordial relations with the socialists; the Council cooperated with the I.L.P. over the Clarion trade federation scheme, and with the S.D.F. over the eight hour day for municipal employees.[81] Finally, it was agreed to set up a Workers' Municipal Committee, in readiness for a "municipal general election" due in 1900 as a result of local government re-organisation.[82] The constitution of this body anticipated in the local context the structure of the national Labour Representation Committee, providing for affiliation of political bodies, trade union branches, co-operative societies, etc., for the purpose of creating a bloc of labour representatives; a substantial number of union branches, as well as the I.L.P. and S.D.F., had affiliated within a year.[83] Three candidates were elected to the School Board (including Thomas Blaikie, another I.L.P.er and the cabinetmakers' delegate) and in the municipal election of 1900 the first Labour Councillor was elected for Dalry ward.[84]

The significance of this electoral activity - both before and after the establishment of the Workers' Municipal Committee - lies as much in the emergence of a distinct "workers' programme", a

[81] T.C. Minutes, 23 March, 7 Sept., 1897. [82] Ibid., 24 Jan., 1899.

[83] Edin. and Leith Workers' Municipal Committee, Minutes, constitution, balance sheet for 1899, printed items inserted.

[84] Ibid., 21 Jan., 1900; Marwick, op.cit. It is perhaps significant that this success occurred in the relatively new industrial suburb of Dalry, rather than in any of the old, central working class areas.

separate labour presence in local politics, as in the success or failure of socialist or Labour candidates. Alex Dickinson on the School Board, for example, opposed repressive measures to deal with truancy, urging that the educational system should instead be adapted to make the experience of the working class child a relevant and attractive one, and exposed the "educational injustice that is done to the working classes" through inadequate accommodation and staffing - a crowd of 2000 attended his funeral when he died only a year and a half after his election.[85] In 1893 the I.L.P. adopted a municipal programme of temperance reform, the fair wages clause, municipal coal depots, the eight hour day for municipal employees, public housing at low rents, and curbs on expenditure on visits by royalty; the Workers' Municipal Committee in 1900 called for fuller use of local powers under housing legislation, rehousing of tenants of demolished property, enforcement of the fair wages clause, etc.[86]

There are a number of senses in which the Labour Party - the characteristic political expression of the labourist working class movement whose emergence in the local context has been traced in this chapter - can be seen as showing a basic continuity with the radical and "Lib-Lab" traditions of the Victorian artisan stratum. Certainly the coincidence of shifts in attitudes among politically active workers and among sections of the central political and intellectual elites, together with the "acculturation" of Labour representatives by parliamentary institutions, made possible the construction of a new liberal-reformist political bloc - a bloc characterised by a commitment to welfare legislation, in which the working class would, however, continue to play a subordinate role.[87] But at grass-roots

[85] Labour Chronicle, Jan., Feb., 1895; Justice, 14 Dec., 1895.

[86] Edin.B., I.L.P., Minutes, 11 Sept., 1893; Workers' Municipal Comm., Minutes, Manifesto 1900, printed item inserted.

[87] Cf. J. Hinton, "The Beginnings of Modern British Politics", Soc. for Study of Labour History Bull., 24, spring, 1972 (review article).

level the dynamic of the labourist coalition came from the socialists, especially from the I.L.P., rather than from the trade union leaderships which provided the money - and often the candidates as well.[88] It was only because a socialist language - in however diffuse a form - provided a meaningful interpretation of their class experience, and changed the consciousness of class that working people felt the need to create their own political party. For one characteristic of "Lib-Labism" was the tendency to make the return of working men to representative bodies an end in itself - the relationship of this to the status aspirations of the mid-Victorian labour aristocracy is clear enough. The distinctive feature of the type of labourism that emerged by the end of the century was, however, the attempt to mobilise and unify all manual workers around a programme of reforms in their perceived class interest. The typical demand of the 1870's was for the removal of "class legislation" held to infringe the worker's rights as a citizen, that of the 90's was for the implementation in his interest of new legislative measures. There was, then, a definite change in the form of class consciousness and in political ideology, associated with the changing life and culture of the manual working class. This change has far-reaching implications for the role of the upper stratum of the working class, who became more clearly committed to mobilising support from a broad class movement.

[88] Studies of the early Labour Party in Leicester and in mining districts suggest this: Cox, op.cit.; Gregory, op.cit., esp. p.32.

CHAPTER 10

IDEOLOGY AND CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS: THE HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE LABOUR ARISTOCRACY

In this work I have tried to show how the class formation of the working class in Victorian Edinburgh was affected - at both the cultural and political levels - by the emergence within it of an economically advantaged and culturally distinct and exclusive upper stratum. This aristocracy of labour diffused perceptions of the social order, modes of class action and definitions of class interest based on its peculiar situation and outlook. Thus the trade unionism and popular radicalism of the 1860's and 70's were interpreted in terms of a striving for social recognition, for symbolic acceptance of the moral independence of the working man and the place within the local community of his corporate institutions. This claim was, as I tried to indicate, not a straightforward question of "deference", but on the contrary a source of class tension and class identity. By the turn of the century, on the other hand, there are signs of a decisive shift in attitude, of the emergence of a more broadly based movement demanding social and economic reforms in the interest of the working class: a phenomenon I call "labourism". If the upper stratum is still, at this later period, identifiable, its role of leadership in the cultural and political institutions of the working class was exercised in a different context and took on a different significance. It is to the wider aspects of the problem of the labour aristocracy that I want to draw attention in this concluding chapter.

In the third quarter of the nineteenth century the formation of a labour aristocracy had a two-fold significance. The upper stratum created relatively autonomous class institutions and had

a distinctive cultural life, thus articulating a sense of class identity. The typical aspirations of the "superior artisan" were for improvement in the position of his social group, and recognition of its corporate claim to moral and political equality, rather than for purely personal advancement - were this not the case, indeed, we would be able to speak only of a common class situation, rather than of the cultural and political formation of a separate stratum. On the other hand, the aspirations of the stratum were often enough expressed in a language "adopted" from the dominant class, so that the institutions and modes of behaviour of the artisan world were contained within a larger local society dominated by the "hegemonic" middle class.[1] Such values as "respectability", "independence", "thrift" were thus mediated by the institutions of the artisan world, their meanings to some extent translated and adapted to the conditions of the would-be "respectable" working man. And the democratic aspirations of the popular radical tradition were, after 1867, effectively contained - despite certain important tensions - within a Liberal movement dominated nationally by middle class and aristocratic elites.

This containment of working class aspirations and institutions was, however, a complex process - certainly it is not readily explicable by any "conspiracy theory" of the indoctrination of the working class. It is rather to be understood in terms of the essentially incoherent and fragmented character of popular ideology. A complex set of political and cultural processes - some, but not all of which were the result of purposive activity by a middle class group - inhibited the generalisation of the more "subversive"

[1] For this concept of cultural and political class "hegemony" see Gramsci, op.cit., discussed above, ch.1.

elements in the class experience and outlook of working people. These processes - which Gramsci referred to as the "contrast between thought and action"[2] - might operate in two directions. On one hand, people might legitmate, suppress or re-interpret their awareness of activities and situations problematic to the formal ideology to which they were, in other social contexts, committed. Thus the practices of solidarity and mutual aid which were a necessary part of the artisan's protective response to his environment might co-exist with individualism, "home-centredness" and cultural exclusiveness. In this way dominant values are adapted to the situation of the subordinate class, to create what Parkin calls a "negotiated version" of the ideology of the ruling class.[3] Equally important to "accommodative" attitudes in the subordinate class, however, is the "negotiated version" of more radical and dissident values.[4] A conscious desire to create a radically different social order might, in practical terms, lead only to courses of action readily contained by minor adaptations of the established order. Thus the stress on financial viability in such bodies as cooperative associations made them - regardless of the ideology of their founders - into organisations catering for the more prosperous strata of the working class and institutionalising the values of thrifty and provident conduct. The sectional character and conciliationist postures of many unions imply a similarly accommodative and protective response to the exigencies of survival within the capitalist society.

[2] Ibid., p.327. [3] Parkin, op.cit., p.92.

[4] Parkin, ibid., pp.98-9, argues that "the mass party has a potentially ... formative influence on ... political perceptions", but does not develop this point with reference to the "subordinate value system". But if "trade union consciousness" is a part of that system (pp.91-2) the radical ideologies of union activists contribute to the formation of the "accommodative" values of the subordinate class.

The emergence of new patterns of class formation has to be seen in relation to this complexity and ambivalence of the world view of the Victorian skilled worker. It is important here to see ideology, as Gramsci did, as having two levels: the meanings attached to particular aspects of social experience; and the systems of "formal ideology" within which those meanings are partly, but never totally "rationalised" and integrated.[5] Thus, at the level of formal ideology, there is a utopian strand of thought, a hope for total emancipation from competitive capitalism. The North Briton in 1861 expressed the hope that there would "eventually rise that grand system of cooperation which will render men individually independent of capital...", and in 1864 even published Owenite articles on "Social Economy".[6] At the level of day-to-day behaviour and meaning-systems, the experience of class solidarity implied modes of conduct at variance with the dominant ideology. A writer in the Labour Chronicle saw socialism as a new, and more valid, interpretation of experiences and aspirations that had hitherto been expressed within the framework of a false consciousness:

> "Lured on by such catch phrases as 'equality before the law' and 'political equality', men seek to extend the bounds of their freedom. In course of time, however, it is seen ... that there can be no all-embracing freedom apart from substantial equality in social condition ... Men then organise themselves for the conscious winning of this goal."[7]

[5] Gramsci, op.cit., pp.325 et seq.
[6] N.B., 23 March, 1861, 5, 12 Oct., 1864.
[7] Labour Chronicle, Oct., 1894.

The emergence of the new labourist class organisation and consciousness of the 1890's must thus be explained in terms of the complex relation between class situation, class action and ideology. It was because labourist and socialist ideas seemed to offer a more meaningful interpretation of their situation that working men sought to build broader industrial and political institutions. This implies a shift in the outlook and role of the aristocracy of labour. The upper stratum came, I would suggest, to form a political, social and cultural elite within a wider working class movement and community. In a sense this role of leadership can be seen as deriving from the feeling of superiority of the mid-Victorian "superior artisan". For example, the pretensions of the middle class Central Benevolent Association were criticised on the ground that: "The working men, who are the nearest to the 'lapsed classes' in physical and social proximity, and therefore know all their bad habits, and how to cure and prevent them, and have also the deepest interest in the work for their wives' and children's sake, should not have been slighted so."[8] In this context the rise of labourism can perhaps be seen as paralleling, at the social level of the upper working class, shifts in middle class reform ideology. There was, as Stedman Jones notes, a change from purely individualistic moralism, to emphasis on the need for reforms which would create the structural preconditions of "moral" conduct among a wider section of the population.[9] It would, however, be quite wrong to see the emergence of socialism and labourism <u>solely</u> in these terms; there was certainly a more basic change in perceptions of the social order and subjective definitions of class identity and interest.

[8] <u>N.B.</u>, 11 April, 1868. [9] Stedman Jones, op.cit., pp.285-6.

The role of the labour aristocracy as an elite within the working class is analytically quite distinct from the phenomenon of professionalised leadership in the labour movement, with which it is sometimes confused.[10] Whereas the aristocrat of labour makes his living by manual labour - even if he is marked off by material advantages and a different style of life - the "professional" leader belongs to "a group of persons permanently and directly engaged in the service of the collectivity", consisting of party and union officials, parliamentarians, journalists, etc.[11] Men employed in this way move in a bureaucratic or political world different from that of manual labour, enjoy a higher and more secure income, and develop a different life style: as a consequence they come to see the problems of the labour movement in a perspective different from that of the manual workers who compose its membership.[12] With the growing size and complexity of union organisation, and the advent, under whatever political auspices, of trade union representation in parliament, the labour leader becomes "an intermediary", a professional expert;[13] as such he works for a negotiated accommodation between the economic and political order and the aspirations and demands of organised workers, channels those demands into approved, "constitutional" courses of action. The aristocracy of labour, I would suggest, played a similar part in the politics of British labourism, but at a local, "grass roots" level. For their part was not a professional but a voluntary one -

[10] For example, Hobsbawm, "Trends in the British Labour Movement", op.cit., p.324, brackets "the professional labour movement of politicians, union officials" etc. with the "favoured 'artisan' stratum".

[11] Michels, op.cit., p.276.

[12] Michels' classic analysis contains a number of dubious statements and a good deal of special pleading; but there can be little doubt that the emergence of professionalised labour leadership was a trend of considerable importance, and had many of the consequences Michels discusses.

[13] Ibid., p.299.

as union and party activists, municipal representatives, etc. It should be emphasised that I am concerned here with the objective consequences, within a wider political structure, of the local activities of the aristocracy of labour; these consequences were not necessarily a direct reflection of the conscious intentions of actors. The importance of the labour aristocracy, in this objective sense, is to be seen in the development of two sets of links with groups outside the manual working class. Locally, the upper working class stratum mediate the activities and aspirations of the working class vis a vis the middle class elites of the local community; the earlier account of social and political alignments in Victorian Edinburgh indicates the importance of this activity. In addition to this, the aristocracy of labour form a link between professionalised labour leaderships - and even political elites generally - and particular working class institutions, communities and sub-cultures. Party structures, of course, articulate such links, and local activists are of key importance. It is precisely because their conditions of life remained those of manual labour that the aristocracy of labour could form a link of this type. And their own voluntary participation in local affairs may, at the same time, have made them receptive to an "accommodative" viewpoint. These comments must remain rather speculative, since they look beyond the scope of the present study, to the growth of the Labour Party in the twentieth century, and its relation to local working class communities. It is nonetheless necessary to make some attempt to sketch in - however roughly - the broader historical context of the analysis.

The labour aristocracy, then, mediated accommodative responses to capitalist society. In the first place, this may have arisen simply from the fact that only the upper strata of the working class were able to create viable protective institutions, to arrive at a modus vivendi with the capitalist order, at a time when that order appeared to have become firmly consolidated. As the power and scope of these organisations increased, the ideologies and traditions of collective action of the labour aristocracy affected the class formation of broader working class strata. It must, however, be remembered that - as the earlier comments on the nature of ideology and class consciousness would suggest - the "accommodative" response co-existed problematically with other tendencies. It is, for example, hard to assess from the existing evidence the likelihood of a convergence of the political radicalism of the artisan with that of the Irish poor, around the land and republican agitation and the early socialist movement.[14] But the possibility was there. Nonetheless the dominant tendency remained the accommodative and reformist one. The convergence that occurred was with the changing class consciousness of artisans, engaged in defensive industial struggles. Its characteristic expression, both nationally and locally, was not a mass socialist party similar to German Social Democracy, and other European socialist parties, but an ad hoc committee with no defined programme beyond the creation of a bloc of Labour representatives. Socialist ideology was transmuted into labourism - a programme of gradualist reforms, combined with a diffuse moralistic

[14] A closer study of the institutions and culture of the Irish community would certainly provide a more adequate account of this than I have been able to give.

critique of competitive capitalism, and an equally diffuse egalitarian and class conscious rhetoric. These tendencies - associated especially with the I.L.P. - show a certain continuity with the ideology of many spokesmen for the mid-Victorian labour movement; the transition to a form of socialism thus did not mean too radical a break with earlier traditions of labour ideology.[15]

The accommodation of the British working class to capitalist society was, however, a negotiated one - and subject, moreover, to constant re-negotiation. This is of key importance in understanding the class outlook of manual workers, and especially of the upper stratum. The process of negotiation presupposes, precisely, strong and autonomous protective class institutions. The defence of those institutions - however it may have been overlaid at some periods with a rhetoric of "self help" borrowed from the dominant class - was a distinctive feature of the class consciousness of the artisan. Associated with this was a strong sense of class pride and an ethic of class solidarity. This class identity was transmitted in the later nineteenth century to a wider class movement and culture - it is not the least of the legacies of the Victorian labour aristocracy.[16]

This study has been concerned to trace these processes in the context of one city. It may therefore be appropriate to conclude with the customary plea for further research - which in this case has a substantive relevance to what has gone before. For if the study has shown anything at all it must surely be the crucial importance - especially in the far more localised society of the

15 As Crowley argues: op.cit., abstract. And cf. F. Reid, in Soc. for Study of Labour History Bull., 16, spring, 1968 (review article), for the characteristics of I.L.P. ideology.

16 Cf. Hobsbawm, "Trends in the British Labour Movement", op.cit., p.232.

nineteenth century - of the specific economic, social and political structures of the city. The conclusions drawn can therefore refer only to the local case; the labour aristocracy model has to be tested in a range of other local settings. It will, for example, clearly have a different application - if it has any validity at all - in homogeneous communities based on a single industry with a mass labour-force, such as the mining areas. Only when we have some comparative account of class structure and class formation in a range of localities can be begin to write working class history as the history of any class must be written - by beginning from the life situation, the hopes and fears of the members of the class.

APPENDICES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

APPENDIX 1

OCCUPATIONAL CLASSIFICATION

The data presented in this work include analyses of the social composition of voluntary organisations (table 5.3), patterns of inter-marriage (tables 5.4-6), and membership of savings institutions (table 6.1). It was therefore necessary to develop a scheme of occupational classification, which is most conveniently discussed in this appendix. The present appendix refers only to the problems encountered in assigning individuals to occupational categories, not to the separate problem of interpreting published census occupation tables; this latter problem is discussed below, appendix 2.

Information as to occupation is sometimes given in the source itself (marriage certificates, savings institutions), sometimes traced in census enumerators' books and/or Post Office Directories from a list of members' names and addresses. Where occupations were traced in this way a varying proportion (indicated in the table concerned) had to be recorded as not traceable. The most obvious reason for this is change of address (especially as the sources do not relate to census years), but other possible reasons include incorrectly recorded addresses, mis-reading of hand-written membership lists, difficulty in finding some addresses (e.g., because of indexing errors by the census clerks), etc. Addresses in the Closes and Courts of the Old Town were especially hard to trace; while the factor of change of address will bias the data against the more mobile. On the other hand, mis-recording and mis-reading of addresses is presumably a more random source of error. At any rate, little can be done about these problems except to draw attention to their existence; and the intrinsic interest of

figures for the social composition of recreational organisations at this period seems to me to out-weight these deficiencies.

It remains to explain the categories used, which were developed in a pilot study of a sub-sample of the Savings Bank clients.

1. Professions, higher administrative, gentlemen, etc.

This category is intended to refer to the upper and more firmly established strata of the middle class. There are problems in defining the boundaries of the "professions" (especially as these changed over the period studied) for which I have consulted the sources listed at the end of this appendix. In general, the concern has been with the social status of the occupation, in the eyes of upper middle class society, rather than with the questions of training and code of ethics which have pre-occupied many students of the professions; occupations are therefore assigned on the evidence of information about their position in middle class society, rather than about education, etc. per se. A number of "marginal" semi-professional groups (e.g. school teachers) are placed in a white collar category (category 4 below). In addition to the established professions, category 1 includes higher civil servants, "gentlemen", etc.

2. Business

All in retail occupations not described as employees, and those in industrial occupations likely to be employers or self-employed by criteria mentioned below. Occupational designations of unknown employment status are therefore treated as employers or self-employed in retailing, but as employees in industry; this seemed appropriate, in view of the differing ratios of employers to employees in the two sectors. In assigning industrial occupations

to the business category (rather than to the appropriate manual category) any or all of the following criteria have been used: described as "master" or "on own account" in census schedule; one or more domestic servants included in household; listed in trades section of Directory. Cross-checking with the Directory did not seem worthwhile for the larger scale analyses (marriage and Savings Bank clients), especially as a sub-sample of the Savings Bank clients showed no appreciable proportion listed. It should, however, be borne in mind that some placed in manual categories will, in fact, be non-wage-earners. (It is also true that many of the smaller businesses may not have appeared in the Directory at all). For the recreational organisations (table 5.3) all such cases were cross-checked and classified accordingly.

Category 2 is, of course, highly heterogeneous, ranging from large and successful businessmen (who may belong most properly to category 1) to self-employed artisans and shopkeepers of clearly working class origins and affiliations. A breakdown between large and small business, while not impossible, would demand a considerable amount of work with such indicators as residence, numbers of domestic servants, etc. This did not seem worthwhile in the context of a study concerned primarily with the manual working class. Provided it is remembered that this category is inevitably more heterogeneous than any other, the absense of such a breakdown will not be too damaging.

3. White collar I: clerical and commercial

Clerks of all sorts, book-keepers, cashiers, commercial travellers, salesman, etc.

4. White collar II: supervisory, technical, minor officials

Whereas category 3 covers those in mainly routine and subordinate

clerical posts, for which the basic skill was proficiency in the "three R's", category 4 covers a more varied range, generally distinguished by some element of technical skill or supervisory responsibility. Examples of such occupations include: assistant inspector of poor; furniture draughtsman; gas surveyor; cemetry superintendent; market inspector; librarian; rail inspector. All teachers are also included in category 4, as are merchant marine officers, and supervisory employees in agriculture (farm overseers, etc.). But all industrial foremen are classified as skilled manual (category 6).

5. Retail, warehouse, etc.: employees

All in retail occupations of definitely employee status (i.e. described as "assistants", etc.). But message boys and porters (except those described specifically as "shop porters") are classified as unskilled manual (category 7); and various personal services of ambiguous employment status (e.g. hairdressers) are placed in a special category (category 10).

6. Manual - skilled

Manual categories (6,7,8) as already noted include all in industrial occupations not classified as non-wage-earners by the criteria stated (see above, category 2). The criterion used to define skilled labour is that of apprenticeship. But this raises the problem of the existence in every trade of a more or less numerous section who had not served regular apprenticeships but had picked up the trade and entered it by the "back door"; a further complication is the impact of technical change in down-grading established skills, and creating newer ones to which the traditional apprenticeship might be irrelevant. The general rule adopted is therefore to treat as skilled all occupational designations which refer to at least some apprenticed workers. And

there is in fact little difficulty in classifying most important occupations by this rule (thus printers, masons, engineers, etc. were clearly regarded by general consent as skilled trades). An exception must however be made for certain sectors of industry (notably the railways, for which I have followed Kingsford's classification of skill grades) which had a series of grades rather than the familiar distinction between the craftsman and the labourer. The railways also exemplify the problem of how to weight the factor of responsibility and initiative, as against manual skills needed to perform the actual physical tasks of the job (e.g. guards, signalmen). In cases of this sort a separate decision must be made for each occupation.

Finally there is the problem of those occupations where we simply lack the information to make a reliable skill classification. Sometimes this is the result of ambiguities in the wording of the source (e.g. "rubber worker"); sometimes it reflects a general lack of information about the occupation. A proportion of these cases will not be soluble, and for this reason a category for manual workers of unclassifiable skill is included (category 8). The size of that category has, however, been minimised by treating as skilled various occupations (mostly makers of musical instruments, sports equipment, etc.) known from the published census occupation tables to have employed extremely small numbers, on the assumption that such occupations were carried on on a handicraft basis.

7. Manual - semi and unskilled

See above, category 6 for procedures of skill classification.

8. Manual - skill unclassifiable

See above, category 6 for procedures of skill classification. Apart from occupations of little importance in Edinburgh which

enter into some of the populations studied (e.g. brides' fathers from other parts of the country), the most important local unclassifiable manual occupations were in the rubber and paper mills.

9. Domestic service, catering employees, etc.

All types of domestic servant; all employed in catering. It is in practice not possible to draw a distinction between the domestic and catering sector; similarly grooms and stablemen may be either domestic servants or employed by transport undertakings. Where no distinction can be drawn such occupations are always classified as domestic. Certain personal services provided on a business basis are however placed in a separate category (category 10), and catering employers and self-employed (e.g. publicans) are placed in the business category (category 2).

10. Miscellaneous personal and public services

All service occupations of ambiguous employment status not classified as domestic servants (e.g. hairdressers), public service employees not easily classifiable as either manual or white collar (e.g. post office telegraphists, and one man described as "mace bearer, Court of Session"); and all entertainers, artists, etc. All transport workers (other than coachmen, who are placed in category 9) and public utility manual workers are placed in appropriate manual categories, and many public service employees are placed in white collar categories; similarly, personal services placed in category 10 are those not easily classifiable as business or domestic service occupations. Category 10 is therefore a residual category of service occupations not elsewhere classified.

11. Police

Includes all ranks. Also includes prison officers.

12. Armed forces

Not officers; officers are placed in category 1.

13. Agriculture, fishing, seamen

These groups are of little importance in the city's occupational structure, but appear in certain of the populations studied (notably the brides' fathers). Merchant marine officers, supervisory and managerial grades in agriculture and farmers and crofters are placed elsewhere (categories 4 and 14).

14. Farmers and crofters

The frequency of this occupation among the brides' fathers justified creating a separate category, which occurs only in the marriage data (tables 5.4-6). The category is a heterogeneous one, possibly ranging from the fringes of the gentry to Highland or Irish subsistence agriculture. Farm overseers, etc. are placed in category 4.

15. Other and miscellaneous

Includes mainly "marginal" forms of petty trading that cannot be placed in category 2 without distortion: hawkers, "dealers", "brokers", etc. (the two latter phrases are used for Irish dealers in second hand goods in the Cowgate area); also various designations of completely unknown meaning, illegible occupations etc.

Sources of Information about Occupations

The sources used in classifying occupations are too scattered to be exhaustively listed, but the more important specific sources are listed below:

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APPENDIX 2

THE INTERPRETATION OF CENSUS TABLES

Any researcher using Victorian censuses quickly becomes aware of their difficulties. It is not possible to arrive at precise measures of the occupational or class structure at any particular census, still less of changes between censuses. The objective of the procedures adopted is the more modest one of at least reducing distortions, and making the censuses more comparable with each other than they otherwise would be. The resultant figures are clues to the shape of the occupational structure, rather than precise quantitative statements. It is not, for example, possible to assimilate census categories to the occupational classification discussed in appendix 1.

Only the censuses of 1861 and 1881-1901 are suitable: the 1851 occupation tables are for the old Royalty of Edinburgh only, very much smaller than the totalbuilt-up area, even at that date,[1] and the 1871 census gives detailed tables only by county. My own tables based on the censuses (tables 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4) include figures for various broadly defined middle class sectors of employment, for domestic service, and for industrial occupations. The non-industrial occupations are treated rather less rigorously than the industrial - for example, nurses, law clerks, etc. are lumped in with the respective professions - my main concern with the middle class being to establish its unusual size and heterogeneity. As explained in the text of chapter 2, I have used Armstrong's scheme to reconstruct five important industrial groups in part A of table 2.3;[2] part B of table 2.3 includes all occupations not included in part A with 100 or more in 1881, many of these being com-

[1] Thorburn, op.cit., table XIX. [2] Armstrong, op.cit.

bined for purposes of analysis (where this has been done the classification is my own).

There are a number of points that demand more detailed discussion: changes in the boundaries to which the tables refer; the definition of occupied population, on which the whole analysis of occupational structure rests; the occupational designations used in my tables, where these are not obvious abbreviations of categories in the census as published; estimation procedures used to disentangle certain occupations which are combined in some censuses but not others, and to distinguish "makers" from "dealers", etc.; and, finally, certain points at which I diverge from the Armstrong scheme. For the sake of clarity I capitalise the first word in each separate census designation (e.g. "Fitter and turner" refers to a single census designation, whereas "Printer, Bookbinder and Mason" refer to three separate designations), and underline my own designations as used in tables 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4, which may or may not coincide with census designations. Where reference is made to the "orders" and "sub-orders" of the census these are cited by Roman numerals (orders) with arabic suffixes (sub-orders).

Boundaries[3]

The occupation tables of 1861 are for the Registration District of Edinburgh, those of 1881 and 1891 are for the Parliamentary Burgh, those of 1901 for the Municipality. The last of these changes is by far the most serious. The Parliamentary Burgh was however extended slightly during the 80's, so that no two occupation tables refer to exactly the same area. In 1861 the population of the

[3] The following sources were consulted: street maps in Post Office Directories; Encyclopedia Britannica, 11th edition, entry on Edinburgh (lists areas incorporated in extensions of 1896, 1900 and 1901).

Registration District was 170,444 (Parlt. Burgh = 168,121). The 1881 Parliamentary boundaries included most of the then built-up area; in 1891 they had been extended slightly, following the expansion of the built-up area, to include more of the middle class suburb of Newington, and part of the industrial and working class area newly growing up in Gorgie-Dalry. The municipal extensions of 1896, 1900 and 1901 took in parts of Liberton and Duddingston, the former Burgh of Portobello, all of Granton, the Gorgie area as far as Saughton, and other large areas to the West. The inclusion of these areas probably had an appreciable effect on the occupational distribution, but one is reduced to informed guessing as to the likely direction of that effect: on balance, it probably added disproportionately to the middle class suburban population. There is, in any case, little that can be done about the problem of boundary changes, beyond drawing attention to its existence.

Occupied Population

Orders XXIV and XXV in 1881 and 1891 and XXIII in 1901, comprising "Persons returned by property, rank etc., or of no occupation", unoccupied children, scholars etc. were subtracted from total population to arrive at a figure for total occupied population; in 1881 Legislator and Army and navy pensioner are listed separately and these were added to the orders mentioned. In 1901 students are placed in the unoccupied group, together with scholars: as I had not previously treated students as unoccupied (though they do not appear among the occupations analysed in any of my tables) it was necessary to adjust for this, by reducing order XXIII in 1901, according to the ratio of students to unoccupied population in 1891. In 1861, dependent relatives, property owners, pensioners,

etc. are scattered throughout the occupation table, and the wives of farmers, shoemakers, innkeepers and various other occupations are listed next to those occupations. These were all picked out and subtracted from the total population, on the assumption that they were later placed in orders XXIV or XXV.

Occupational Designations

Table 2.2.
Administration: order I, except Legislator, 1881. Church Law, Medicine, Teaching: order III.1-4, except students, 1881. Other professions, miscellaneous services: all order III.5-8. Commerce: all order V. Domestic service: all order IV.

Table 2.3.

The industrial groups in part A are based on the following sections of the Armstrong/Booth classification:[4] Printing: Manufacture, 30; Building: Building, 2; Engineering and metals: Manuf., 1, 4, 5; Clothing: Manuf., 22; Transport: Transport,45.

Other Printing, Other Building, Other Engineering, Other Clothing: indicate all occupations not separately listed placed by Armstrong in those industrial groups. Other Wood and Other Food and Drink are my own categories, as detailed below. Bookbinder: females under the designation Bookfolder, newsagent, 1861 are placed under Bookbinder, bookfolding being a semi skilled binding process, and numbers in that category being comparable to numbers of females under Bookbinder in later censuses (numbers of female newsagents in later censuses are negligible). Building Labourer: Masons', bricklayers' lab. and Plasters' lab. combined. These designations do not appear in 1861, when Mason and Plasterer presumably include labourers. Engineer: Engine and machine maker combined with Fitter

[4] Armstrong, op.cit., pp.284-93.

and turner. Iron, Brass Manuf.: the census designations referred to are Iron- and Brassfounder in 1861 and 1901; Brass finisher, 1901 is also included here. Rail: all railway workers have been combined. Furniture Trades: Cabinet maker, upholsterer, French polisher,[5] and Carver and gilder. Other Wood: Sawyer, Wood turner, box maker. Leather: Tanner, Currier, leather goods, Saddle, harness, whip maker. Baker: 1901, Bread, biscuit, cake, etc.-maker. Other Food and Drink: Miller, Confestioner, pastry cook, Maltster, Distiller, Tobacco. Papermaking: Paper manuf., Envelope maker, Paper bag, box, etc. Undefined Manuf.: designations such as Mechanic, undefined, etc. 1901: in a number of occupations dealers are distinguished for the first time in 1901. There may thus be distortions due to the fact that these dealers are excluded, whereas they had previously been indistinguishable (it is not always clear under what designation such dealers were included in previous censuses, so that estimation is not feasible). If included these categories would increase the engineering group by 0.08 per cent and the clothing group by 0.24 per cent.

Estimation Procedures

The following procedures (as recommended by Armstrong) have been adopted. Domestic Service: Gardener and Coachman, 1891 are not differentiated between those in domestic service and others; they are allocated by the 1881 ratio of domestic to other (see below, Cabman, coachman). Other Building: includes Wood carver, which is combined with Carver and gilder, 1901: allocated by 1891 ratio. Other Clothing: includes Hatter, 3/4 of whom are allocated to manufacture and included in table 2.3 under this heading. Cabman, coachman: 1891 includes estimate for non-domestic coachmen (see

[5] These trades are given separately in some censuses, and in various combinations in others.

above, Domestic Ser.). Furniture Trades: Cabinetmaker .... etc. 1891 includes dealers; allocated by 1881 ratio. Carver and gilder, 1901 combined with Wood carver (see above, Other Building); allocated by 1891 ratio. Other Food and Drink 1881, 1891, Tobacco manuf. combined with retail; allocated by 1861 ratio.

Divergences from Armstrong Classification

Designations definitely referring mainly to employers or managers excluded from all industrial groups. Other Printing: includes Paper ruler, placed by Armstrong in his Papermaking group (not fully reconstructed in table 2.3); ruling was closely allied to the commercial branch of binding, at least in Edinburgh (e.g. rulers belonged to the same craft union as bookbinders). Messenger, porter: placed with transport. Jewellry, Precious metals, Watches, etc.: Armstrong suggests that half jewellers should be allocated to retailing. This did not seem justified, in view of the fact that Edinburgh was a centre of jewellry manufacture,[6] and the distinction made in 1901 between manufacture and retailing revealed a preponderance of manufacture. The proportion in these trades is therefore based on the figures as given with no modification for retailing.

[6] Bremner, op.cit., pp.123-131.

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Location of all manuscript and rare printed sources is shown as follows:

BM	British Museum Newspaper Library
EPL	Edinburgh Public Library
LSE	British Library of Economic and Political Science, London School of Economics
NLS	National Library of Scotland
Webb	Webb Trade Union Collection, at LSE
*	MS items kept at the offices of the organisation concerned

For other abbreviations and explanation of references to the Webb collection, see list of abbreviations at the beginning.

For some minute books and serial printed items extending beyond the end of the period studied (1900) only the date at which the run commences is given.

Note. Unless otherwise stated, place of publication is Edinburgh for printed primary sources (section B.4) and London for secondary sources (section D).

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